Cultural Diversity
In the United States
A Book of Readings

Excelsior College

Excelsior College Faculty Committee
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Diversity Orientations: 
Culture, Ethnicity, and Race

Kimberly P. Martin

INTRODUCTION

Culture, ethnicity, race are three terms frequently used interchangeably in everyday conversation and which also have varying meanings depending on the interpretation of the individual using them. In this chapter, three precise and distinctive definitions for these terms will be used, not only to compare the broad range of meaning they connote, but as a vehicle for distinguishing three orientations toward diversity-based interactions. It will be shown that these three orientations represent very different assumptions about what goes on in the diversity-based interactions occurring every day in multicultural societies. These different assumptions permeate diversity-based interactions at the personal and social levels for all of us. They influence how we relate to our families, neighbors, and friends, as well as to our peers, colleagues, and co-workers. They affect how we form opinions about, meet, work and socialize with others, as well as how people in everyday life react to us. They contribute to the nature of family dynamics, community relations, and national politics. In the study of diversity as an academic pursuit, these orientations influence how teachers and students receive, process, internalize, and feel about the various issues, research, and activities that are covered in the classroom. In sum, these three diversity orientations have profound implications for how we approach personal and social interactions in a culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse social milieu, as well as how we learn and teach about diversity issues.

CULTURE

The first definition that is central to an understanding of diversity issues is the definition of culture. Here culture will be defined as the abstract, learned, shared rules and standards for interpreting experience and organizing behavior in a society, including the behaviors and material possessions that are produced by those rules and standards (Spradley & McCurdy 1989). This definition refers to both real and ideal rules and standards for how people ought to behave, whether those standards are consciously attended to or unconsciously assumed. Our behavior and values, our material possessions, social institutions, and spiritual beliefs all reflect the underlying culture that we share with the other members of our society. Culture is the automatic pilot that guides our behavior and makes us predictable and intelligible to those around us (Goodeenough 1961). It provides us with guidelines for evaluating our own behavior as well as that of others.

As long as those with whom we interact are using the same culture as we are, interactions are efficient and productive. We feel comfortable and competent. We like the feeling of belonging that comes from interacting within our own cultural milieu. We are proud when we perform according to the standards of our cultural group. Along with this pride and competency comes ethnocentrism, the belief that our culture is superior to others and that we should judge others by our superior standards. This powerful self-centeredness about the importance of our own culture
negatively colors how we view and evaluate individuals and groups who are culturally different from us (Klopf 1991; Parillo 1994). Because of ethnocentrism, we may view the behavior of culturally different groups to be embarrassing, immoral, or worthy of contempt or condemnation, rather than just different.

Ethnocentrism is not the only problem we encounter when we try to interact across cultures. Being in an unfamiliar cultural setting may mean not knowing what will happen next or how to behave appropriately. It is not uncommon to become frustrated, frightened, angered, or anxious when the behavior of others does not meet our expectations. These negative emotional reactions are called culture shock (Oberg 1979; Klopf 1991). The anxieties and discomfort of culture shock may cause us to avoid contact with those who are culturally different from ourselves.

The definition of culture used here highlights one of the ways in which problems arise in everyday diversity-based interactions: the misunderstandings that occur when people are operating according to different sets of cultural rules. Sometimes this results in bewilderment when the behavior of others seems to make no sense. At other times it results in antagonism when the cultural rule sets of those involved conflict with one another and behaviors are misinterpreted as threatening or negative. Focusing on the definition of culture highlights a way of looking at diversity-based problems as misunderstandings between individuals who are using different sets of cultural rules, rather than problems based on clashes of ethnic identity or power-based struggles involving oppression.

**Cultural Orientation Assumptions**

Individuals using a *cultural orientation* tend to make a certain number of assumptions about why problems occur in diversity-based interactions. The first assumption is that problems in these interactions only arise when the different sets of cultural rules and standards about how one should behave get in the way of productive communication. Individuals with this orientation believe that conflict arises for one of two reasons: (1) because people do not know enough about each other's standards and rules to interact productively with one another; and/or (2) because people make faulty ethnocentric assumptions about the superiority of their own learned cultural rules and standards. Lack of cultural knowledge creates misunderstanding, embarrassment, and anger because others are perceived as acting in ways that are rude, ignorant, foolish, or downright offensive. The assumption of ethnocentric superiority creates barriers to acquiring knowledge about other cultures, leading in many cases to the kinds of fixed, negative perceptions of others that we call prejudice.

Diversity-based interactions frequently result in powerful negative emotions such as anger, embarrassment, impatience, and irritation. The second assumption that cultural orientation individuals tend to make is that such negative emotions result from the seeming strangeness and inappropriateness of the behavior of those who do not share their particular cultural rules. These emotions are perceived as the consequence of misunderstanding, and not necessarily of intentional mistreatment, discrimination, or oppression.

Because of this perception, cultural orientation individuals assume that negative emotions will disappear once everyone understands that the problems are merely a misunderstanding. On the basis of this orientation, it is logical to assume that the solutions for diversity interaction problems are: (1) to be aware that different sets of rules exist for various cultural, ethnic, and racial groups; (2) to set aside the idea that your own culture is superior to all others; and then (3) to learn each other's cultural rules and standards so that those interacting with one another have the tools to correctly interpret each other's behavior. Knowing each other's rules and standards is, for the person using the cultural orientation, the key to eliminating embarrassment, discomfort, annoyance, and anger, as well as restoring clear communication in the interaction.
People who are using the cultural orientation tend to assume that cultural rules exist at an intellectual level that is easily accessible to both those who live by those rules and to outsiders, particularly when insider members of the other group are willing to explain and help with this process. The roles of insider and outsider often are defined by the cultural context in which the interaction takes place. For example, good communication and positive interaction at a Native American powwow would be made possible if Native Americans were willing to share cultural knowledge about the event with the non-Indian visitors, while at the same time the visitors were willing to learn and abide by the Native American cultural rules and standards that define the powwow. At a Native American event, the insider cultural context is Native American, and the non-Indian visitors are the outsiders who need to acquire, learn and practice new cultural knowledge in order to make the interaction work. Conversely, an interaction between European Americans and traditional Native Americans in a European American business setting would require the insider/outsider roles to be reversed; the cultural context of the interaction would be the European American, and the Native Americans would be expected to make the accommodation to the norms and rules of that culture.

Of course it is also possible for there to be some mutual adjustment of cultural rules. In the example above, this would require the European Americans to learn the rules of the powwow and do their best to follow those rules, while the Native Americans would show tolerance for European American behaviors which either intentionally or perhaps mistakenly violate the cultural norms of the powwow. In a European American business setting, the Native Americans might learn and follow the European American cultural rules, while the European Americans might show tolerance for the Native American behaviors that violate the cultural norms of the business setting. In these cases, both groups would have learned about each other's cultures and would accommodate each other to facilitate friendly, productive interaction.

These examples represent how individuals using cultural orientation see the task of resolving diversity-based communication problems as a process of assembling "recipes" for culturally correct interactions in different cultural contexts, and learning the recipes for future use. They assume that all of the participants in this kind of interaction should have an equal motivation and responsibility for helping to overcome the cultural misunderstandings that occur, either in making their own cultural rules accessible to others, or in learning and accommodating the cultures of others.

Cultural orientation individuals assume that people involved in diversity-based interactions wish to accomplish goals that are unrelated to the cultural differences between them, and that their desire to accomplish these goals is more important than any cultural, ethnic, and racial differences. For example, an American business executive who is trying to negotiate a contract with a Japanese counterpart is doing so to obtain a needed product or service. When such an interaction is viewed from a cultural orientation, the cultural differences between the American executive and the Japanese executive present stumbling blocks to the negotiation process but are not, themselves, directly a part of what either of the individuals is seeking in the interaction.

Individuals operating with a cultural orientation presume that both parties want the interaction to be mutually satisfying, and that the only thing missing is the knowledge that would allow them to communicate with one another effectively enough to get the job done. International corporations such as Arthur Anderson, Inc., and Motorola have incorporated cultural orientation training as a normal part of the job for employees who work overseas. They receive language training and use interpreters to mediate the language barriers. They train employees about ethnocentrism and culture shock. They give intensive training about the culture of
the society in which the employee will work, including conventions for polite behavior, conversation styles, values, nonverbal communication, and business protocol. The goal of all of this training is to eliminate the unwanted cross-cultural complications and misunderstandings that might prevent business goals from being realized.

The cultural orientation presents a perspective that is very different from the ethnic and racially based oppression orientations. The assumptions and expectations of the cultural orientation are not only different from those of the other orientations, but frequently those differences become flash points for anger and resentment, and sometimes even prejudice and hatred. In the next section, the focus is on the definition of ethnicity and the ethnic orientation that is derived from that definition, as well as how the expectations and assumptions of the ethnic orientation are in conflict with those of the cultural orientation.

ETHNICITY

For the purposes of this chapter, the term ethnicity is defined as membership in a group with which one chooses to affiliate on the basis of shared ancestry and/or cultural heritage. Boundaries are central to the idea of ethnicity. We are either insiders or outsiders because of our ethnic affiliations. We can only be insiders if there are outsiders with whom we contrast ourselves. The focus on rational or geographical origins as a way of designating membership in an ethnic group works well in many cases (Parillo 1994; Farley 1995). The definition used here adds the component of choice. Increasingly, multicultural societies are made up of individuals who can trace their ancestry and origins to multiple nationalities, religions, languages, traditions, and cultures. This is particularly true of Americans. Many choose one of these heritages as the focus of their ethnic identity, while ignoring or de-emphasizing the others. Here, ethnicity becomes something the individual embraces consciously. Another reason to emphasize choice in this definition is that ethnic identification varies in strength and emphasis, depending on the individual. Some individuals will practice the religion of their ethnic group, but not retain the language. Others will adopt ethnic names, but deviate from traditional family roles or reject traditional holiday rituals. Regardless of the variations on ethnic identity that are present in American multicultural society, pride and identity based on group membership are at the center of the concept. Ethnicity is an important way to be an insider.

We mark ourselves as insiders by using distinctive communication styles and characteristic behavior patterns, that is, by acting out a shared set of cultural rules and standards. Behavioral markers such as vocabulary, gestures, clothing, and social conventions serve not only as vehicles for communicating content unambiguously within a particular cultural context, but also in several other extremely important ways.

Behavioral markers symbolize the distinctive heritage of the group. This heritage can reflect common experiences grounded in such factors as ancestry, nationality, language, religion, culture, or political and social experience. For individuals using an ethnic orientation, culturally derived behavioral markers do not constitute the distinctive characteristics of members of the group, they are simply the outward signs of these more substantial differences derived from shared experiences in the past. Examples of shared experiences might be the oppression of slavery or job discrimination, the pride of accomplishment in technological advancement, or the symbolism and style of the traditional music and art. Shared experiences and perspectives derived from history and heritage constitute the core of ethnic identity. Thus, for someone with this orientation, it is not the way in which people greet each other that matters, rather, the greeting is important as a symbol of underlying shared experience and perspective that allows insiders to recognize and acknowledge one another.
In addition to symbolizing the underlying commonalities of group members, behavioral markers serve as ongoing reaffirmations of group membership that are frequently a central component of personal identity for group members. Ethnic markers are used to publicly claim membership in a group whose existence and solidarity is of central importance to the individual. Pride, security, comradeship, and a sense of empowerment are all important by-products of membership in an ethnic group. This is particularly true for members of ethnic minorities, whose history includes the systematic devaluing of ethnic culture through social and political oppression. Historically, American minority groups such as Latinos and African-Americans have been effectively able to combat oppression and prejudice through group solidarity and political activism constructed around ethnic identity.

Boundaries must be maintained for an ethnic group to have meaning. In the case of ethnicity, boundaries are signaled by behavioral markers, for example, the zoot suit clothing style of Latinos in the 1940s. Insiders have the right to membership (and therefore the right to use the behavioral markers) because they share heritage together, not because they have the cultural knowledge to act like an insider. Just knowing the behavioral markers of the group does not entitle anyone to use them, unless that individual also shares the crucial core experiences that make him or her a member of the group. Outsiders who do not share the insiders' ethnic heritage, but try to participate in the group by using its behavioral markers, are seen as reducing the differences between the groups to superficialities that demean the crucial importance of the ethnic experience. In addition, for those insiders who draw self-esteem and identity from their ethnicity, de-emphasizing or ignoring the substantive historical and experiential characteristics of an ethnic group actually means denying essential parts of their personal identity.

This perspective on the behaviors that mark membership in an ethnic group is diametrically opposed to those used by individuals coming from a different cultural orientation. From the cultural orientation perspective, culture facilitates interactions among people who know the rules. From the ethnic orientation perspective, culture is symbolic of shared experience and heritage. For the former, cultural differences are to be overcome so that interactions can be productive and successful. For the latter, culture is to be guarded and protected as a symbol of membership in a select group that is not accessible to just anyone.

When the individual with a cultural orientation tries to assemble a recipe for interacting productively with members of an ethnic group, that recipe will include ethnic markers that are considered by the ethnic insider as the exclusive property of insiders. The person with an ethnic orientation is not willing to share behavioral markers with outsiders, and is not interested in teaching others how to use those markers to accomplish productive interactions within the ethnic group. Further, that ethnic insider is likely to resent and reject the well-meaning attempts of the outsider to fit in. Lack of knowledge about the importance of ethnic markers on the part of the person with the cultural orientation, combined with rejection on the part of the person with the ethnic orientation, frequently leads to further misunderstanding, avoidance, and sometimes long-standing prejudice on the part of both participants.

**Ethnic Orientation Assumptions**

As in the case of the cultural orientation, the ethnic orientation presents a set of assumptions concerning what is going on in diversity interactions. One implicit assumption of this orientation is that all individuals need an ethnic affiliation of some sort in order to construct their own personal identity. For example, during discussions in college classes, individuals using an ethnic orientation frequently are patronizing toward whites or European Americans who do not claim an ethnic identity other than American. They feel that these "American" individuals are lacking a central core self-knowledge and self-identity and feel sorry for them. And
it is not only the ethnic orientation individuals who see ethnic identity in this way. The white/European American individuals frequently are embarrassed by and sometimes defensive about what they perceive to be a lack of ethnic identity.

Individuals using an ethnic orientation further tend to assume that all ethnic identities in a multicultural society are entitled to equal respect, and that everyone in such a society should acknowledge and accommodate the ethnic characteristics that form part of the identity of others. This assumption is particularly important as a response to the devaluation and disrespect shown to ethnic minority groups in de facto and de jure discrimination and oppression throughout the history of U.S. society. Respectful acknowledgment of ethnicity by the dominant society as a whole, and by individual members of dominant society as they interact with minority individuals, is seen as a critical component for attaining and maintaining any equal status for minority individuals. Respectful acknowledgment includes recognition of the ethnic markers of others as well as refraining from using markers that are not part of one's own ethnic identity.

A third assumption is that diversity interactions represent one of the places where this kind of acknowledgment and validation of ethnic identity should occur, and that accommodation of differences is at least as important as any other goal associated with such interactions. By extension, the ethnic orientation assumes that many members of our multicultural society, especially members of the dominant culture, have not in the past, and do not currently, accord ethnicity its proper place in interpersonal processes, nor do they respect or accommodate the characteristics that are of central importance to many ethnic minority group members.

In fact, the history of the multicultural society in the United States is one of dominant group ethnocentrism involving devaluation of and discrimination against unassimilated groups. Dominant society and its members have not been respectful of ethnic minorities, while forcing minorities to treat white and European American ethnicities with respect. People who use an ethnic orientation tend to see this as a major problem in diversity interactions. For these individuals, the solution to this problem is seen as primarily the responsibility of the dominant society members (whites and European Americans), who must adjust their attitudes, behaviors, and institutions to accommodate the diverse ethnic groups that constitute the reality of American society.

People who approach diversity-based interactions with an ethnic orientation also frequently assume that diversity-related communication problems can be solved only if all members of the society become aware of, acknowledge, and respectfully accommodate all of the differences that mark the boundaries of ethnic groups. Ethnic orientation individuals strongly believe that no one should be asked to give up their ethnic characteristics, and hence their ethnic identity, for the convenience of others during interactions involving diversity.

A good example of a group of individuals who were using the assumptions of the ethnic orientation appeared on a recent television talk show. On this program, African-American and European American teenagers argued heatedly over the issue of "sagging." Sagging refers to wearing oversized jeans or shorts cinched in at the hips with a belt so that the waistline of the pants hits the widest part of the hip several inches below the waist, the pant's crotch falls mid-thigh to knee, and the pants are very baggy. The controversy on the show centered around the claim of the African-American teens that sagging was an African-American style of dress, and that European American teenagers had no right to sag. In this case, the European American teens were not trying to use the ethnic marker of sagging as a way of joining any ethnically defined social group of African-American teens. Instead, they simply admired the style and wanted to adopt it for themselves.

The entire hour of the talk show was devoted to a verbal battle between these two groups of teens. In essence, the African-American group was defending sagging as an ethnic symbol that could be used legitimately only by members of the African-
American ethnic group. An analogy may clarify how the African-Americans felt. Imagine that England or Japan or Russia suddenly began to fly the stars and stripes as their national emblem instead of their traditional national flag. How would Americans react? Probably with outrage on the part of U.S. citizens, not because there is anything inherently American about stars or stripes or the colors (red, white, and blue), but because a particular pattern and configuration of those elements are strongly identified with the United States and its heritage. African-American youths have developed configurations and patterns of speech, dress, and movement that represent their identity in similar ways, and their reaction is not so surprising when viewed from the perspective of the ethnic orientation.

In contrast, the European American teenagers' response sits neatly into the cultural orientation outlined above. They argued that they had a right to wear their pants any way they wanted. The European American teens saw different ways of wearing clothing as options that were available to anyone who liked what they saw. They liked the style, and therefore they sagged. For them, sagging was just a stylist choice, not a statement of ethnic identity. Ethnicity was not particularly important to them, and they were not able to understand why the African-American group had such strong feelings about sagging.

The television program was intended to stimulate discussion about relations between ethnic groups, and to present an example of the kinds of conflict that arise due to ethnic boundaries. Likewise, in an academic context, the *ethnic orientation* is one of the primary orientations represented in ethnic studies courses and readings, where knowledge of the history and heritage of American ethnic groups forms the core of the curriculum.

**RACE**

The third term used to delineate differences in diversity orientations is race. Anthropologists, through decades of study and research, have failed to find any *biologically* based set of characteristics that clearly establishes racial groups as scientifically accurate categories for understanding or categorizing human beings (Montague 1964, 1965). However, race continues to be a powerful concept in the *social sciences*. For the purposes of this analysis, the following social science definition of *race* is used: a social category based on arbitrary physical or cultural characteristics that is used for purposes of discrimination.

One important key to understanding this definition is in recognizing that physical characteristics only become important for classifying people into groups if the society chooses to recognize and utilize them in this way. In the United States, we have arbitrarily chosen skin color, eye form, hair texture, and certain facial features as criteria for attributing race, while ignoring other physical traits such as blood type, lactose tolerance, or ear shape. As Farley states, "Physical characteristics partially define race, but only in the context of a decision by a society to consider those physical characteristics relevant. This illustrates an important fact: Race is a socially constructed concept" (1995:5). It is also notable that, here in the United States, racial attribution based on language, religion and cultural practices becomes intertwined with that based on physical features, further emphasizing the arbitrary and social nature of racial categories. Americans also depend on different traits to recognize membership in particular racial groups. For example, eye shape is used to categorize Asian Americans apart from European Americans, but are not useful for telling African-Americans from European Americans. By the same token, skin color or tone is useful in determining whether an individual is African-American or European American, while it is frequently not useful in distinguishing Asian Americans from European Americans.

In the definition of race used here, the word discrimination is an important component. This definition focuses on the use of racial criteria to categorize people in order to discriminate either for or against them. Here the word *discriminate* is
used in its most general sense, meaning to treat differently. Differential treatment becomes especially significant in the context of an imbalance of power, where one group exercises control over another. Those who have access to power benefit from positive discrimination. Membership in the power-based group (often referred to as the majority or dominant group) provides an ongoing advantage to that group, along with the accompanying pride in membership in that privileged group (Farley 1995). Conversely, the results of systematic discrimination are painful and often psychologically, economically, and politically crippling to those who do not have power and, therefore, experience negative discrimination and mistreatment. Pain, hurt, anger, and powerlessness result from the mistreatment, and are compounded both because members of oppressed groups do not have the resources and status to protect themselves from discrimination, and because they do not have appropriate channels to vent their frustration and rage. The term minority is used to refer to groups that have been systematically oppressed within their own societies, regardless of the numbers of individuals represented in the group (Farley 1995).

The expectation of mistreatment when interacting with members of more powerful groups is a natural consequence for minority individuals who have experienced habitual discrimination. Furthermore, children are taught by their families, friends, and peers to expect mistreatment, and to handle oppression and discrimination in the same ways that have worked for other members of their group. Suspicion, defensiveness, cynicism, and highly emotional responses that seem out of proportion to the situation at hand are commonly described in discussions of minority group oppression. These emotions are an important component of the oppression orientation to diversity interactions.

In this discussion, the main focus is on racial discrimination and racial oppression. Race is one of the most powerful and pervasive social concepts in American society. There are, however, other kinds of criteria that are used to categorize people into groups for the purposes of discrimination. Some examples of nonracial minority groups in the United States include women, the elderly, and homosexuals. Members of these groups also experience oppression and may operate from an oppression orientation.

**Oppression Orientation Assumptions**

The basic assumption of the oppression orientation is that diversity-based interactions always result in mistreatment or oppression of the less powerfully affiliated individual or group. Oppression can be consciously perpetrated or can result from the thoughtless participation of dominant society individuals in discriminatory systems that form their normal everyday cultural milieu. People coming from an oppression orientation assume that diversity-based interaction problems can be resolved only if mistreatment ceases, and power is taken from the dominant group and given to the oppressed individual or group. The dominant group can yield power to the minority group, or the minority group can seize power in some way in order to avoid oppression. In either case, the oppression orientation individual believes it essential not only to restore power to those from whom it has been taken, but also to heal the psychological, economic, and political wounds suffered by members of the oppressed group and to provide reparation for past wrongs. Only after these things have been accomplished can relations improve between racial groups.

Because power is assumed to take a number of forms, it can be found in several partial solutions to the interaction problems as they tend to be perceived by the individual using an oppression orientation. Ethnic revitalization and the strength of numbers found in ethnic group affiliation provides one avenue of empowerment. Violence against the dominant society or against minority peers provides a vent for rage, and gives a temporary sense of power, even though it may not directly affect the kinds of mistreatment that are at the root of the oppression. Finally, commitment
to, and action on, the part of dominant society members to the elimination of both oppressive situations and their causes is a central component to the process of shifting the power balance toward equality for oppressed groups.

The healing process itself presents a different kind of power, the psychological empowerment of individuals. The victims of oppression want the opportunity to express, in a safe context to an appropriate target audience, the hurt, anger, and frustration that accumulates from systematic oppression. Acknowledgment by dominant society members that the system in which they have prospered is responsible for great pain and suffering on the part of others is vindicating for members of oppressed groups, and also contributes to the healing process. The solutions that are considered necessary to defuse diversity-based interactions from the oppression orientation involve healing the wounds of those who have suffered oppression, and restoring to them their dignity, self-esteem, and personal power over their own lives.

The trial of O.J. Simpson for the murder of his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman, provides us with an excellent example of the oppression orientation. All over the United States, in conversations with family, friends, and co-workers, in discussions on radio and television talk shows, and in newspapers and magazines, people followed this trial and voiced their thoughts and feelings about the guilt or innocence of Mr. Simpson, about the individuals involved in trying the case, and about the trial proceedings. It was not uncommon to hear observers say that the system was biased against Simpson because he was African-American. Suspicions of police racism and conspiracy, of attorney bias, and of juror prejudice based on racial considerations were commonly expressed, frequently with considerable passion.

A number of individuals voiced the opinion that even if Mr. Simpson was guilty, he should not be convicted, because so many whites have committed crimes, including murder, against African-Americans and have not been punished. In some cases, individuals expressing this opinion did not rely on evidence about police, attorney, or juror bias in the case at hand. They spoke passionately about the systemic racial bias they have experienced and observed in American society.

It is not the racially based opinions, themselves, that constitute the oppression orientation, but the fact that these individuals looked immediately and exclusively to racism to make sense of the trial. Their experience told them that because dominant and minority individuals were interacting with one another in the Simpson case, racism must be the central issue. For many minority individuals, the evidence of their lives has proven that the answer to virtually every problem lies in resolving the issue of racism. Certainly the evidence of African-American history shows that for centuries racism has been the barrier that prevented members of this group from progressing educationally, economically, personally, and socially. It should not be surprising that some African-Americans still believe that it is a waste of time to look elsewhere for explanations and solutions in diversity-based interactions.

Two major differences become apparent here between the cultural and the oppression orientations. First, the focus of the cultural orientation on cultural differences is seen by people using the oppression orientation as trivial and an attempt to evade the real issue which is power and its use and misuse. Second, the oppression orientation blames dominant society, which is seen as being primarily European American, for past injustices. From their perspective, the responsibility to share power and undo inequality rests primarily with individual European American dominant society members who have benefited from the unjust status quo. European Americans who use a cultural orientation may be accused of evading responsibility assigned them by the oppression orientation. Further, they may be accused of using the cultural orientation as a smoke screen to avoid addressing how the power structure can be made more fair, and therefore as a smoke screen for maintaining the status quo for their own benefit.

The cultural orientation does not address power or oppression, and people using this orientation tend to see themselves as nonprejudiced individuals who are trying
their best to get along in a multicultural society. They are shocked when they are personally assigned responsibility for historic injustice and angry when they are accused of taking advantage of inequalities in the power structure for their own benefit.

A DIVERSITY ORIENTATIONS MODEL

The three diversity orientations outlined above, cultural orientation, ethnic orientation, and the oppression orientation, provide complementary parts of a model for helping us to understand the complicated context in which diversity-based interactions take place. This model is based on several premises, each of which is essential to its usefulness. First, individuals approach diversity-based interactions with expectations and assumptions from one or more of the three orientations. Second, most people assume that those with whom they interact share their assumptions about what should be happening in the interaction. Third, most people are not aware that there is any orientation to diversity-based interactions other than their own. Fourth, most diversity-based interactions occur between people with orientations that are totally different from each other. And fifth, an understanding of how people operate within these orientations has the potential of making a crucial difference in the intellectual and emotional dynamics of what occurs as people reach across cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries.

The three orientations presented here, of course, abstract and simplified. They are not necessarily separate or mutually exclusive in the real world of people's minds and their feelings. Some individuals seem highly focused in one of these orientations, while others approach diversity-based interactions with assumptions, emotions, and expectations from some combination of the three. It is also possible for a given individual to shift orientations from one interaction to another, given variable interaction contexts or participants. It is also important to emphasize that no ranking of these orientations in order of importance or influence is implied in the model. Each orientation represents an equally valid point of view from a particular perspective, and each has an important place in our understanding of what goes on in diversity-based interactions. It is absolutely necessary to attend to all three to truly understand the dynamics of multicultural society.

Many people, however, do seem to have a primary diversity orientation that guides their interactions with others most of the time, and which is derived from their enculturation and life experience. For example, it is common for European Americans in the United States to operate from a cultural orientation. Such individuals take their identity from the dominant society and use that group as their frame of reference. They have not felt a compelling need for the pride and solidarity of ethnic group affiliation; rather, they take their membership in the "mainstream" social group for granted. They have not experienced systematic mistreatment because of their membership in the dominant society, and therefore they do not perceive diversity-based interactions as inherently oppressive. They frequently are surprised when others respond to their well-meaning interaction attempts with suspicion and hostility born of bitter experience, or hurt when others reject their well-meaning attempts to fit into an ethnic context where they are not welcome by using behavioral markers whose underlying symbolism they do not fully understand.

In such arenas as international business, interactions are more straightforward because, although culturally different, both participants tend to be members of their respective dominant society groups, are members of the same special interest groups, and share the cultural orientation to diversity-based interactions. In this case, both are implicitly focused on an interaction goal unrelated to the cultural differences between them, and both share a commitment to solving the well-meaning culture clashes (Brislin et al., 1986) that interfere with the attainment of that goal.
In contrast, minority individuals frequently approach diversity-based interactions from the *ethnic* and/or the *oppression orientation*. Those who have personally experienced systematic oppression or who have been enculturated to expect systematic oppression may operate from the *oppression orientation*. They expect to be mistreated. They feel powerless against oppression and discrimination. Anger and rage build up. They want justice, not just for the situation at hand, but for the long-term oppression experiences of their group. Their experience tells them that the solution to all problems lies in overthrowing the oppression that has plagued them and their ancestors, families, and peers.

Individuals who derive important personal identity from ethnicity are likely to operate from an *ethnic orientation*, placing a high value on ethnic markers and the underlying heritage they symbolize. They do not want to have to give up their ethnicity to succeed. They want to be free to "walk-the-talk" and "talk-the-talk" in a respectful multicultural society. Ethnicity historically has been a very important central empowerment tool for minority groups, increasing personal and social solidarity as well as political leverage against oppression. As a consequence, many minority group members operate from an orientation that combines the assumptions of both the *ethnic* and the *oppression orientations*.

All Americans find themselves in diversity-based interactions on a daily basis in their everyday lives. In today's world, we cannot escape talking and working with people of different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and different diversity orientations. Our personal, social, and economic success in a multicultural society will depend on our ability to have productive diversity-based interactions and relationships.

Successful diversity-based interactions begin with self-knowledge. It is critical for members of America's multicultural society to discover their own individual diversity orientations, to develop an understanding of how these orientations came out of their personal life experiences, and to explore how these orientations might affect their interactions with others. It is equally critical for all Americans to learn to recognize these orientations in those with whom they interact. By doing so, the chances of identifying conflicting goals and expectations before they become problematic are increased. People need to interpret the behavior of others by taking into account the different kinds of experiences and emotions that can complicate even the most straightforward diversity interaction.

**WHICH INDIVIDUAL IS MOST LIKE YOU?**

One person may be repulsed and angered by the cultural traditions of another, who is, in turn, puzzled and hurt by this rejection. Which individual is most like you? Can you understand and empathize with the point of view of the other?

One person may adopt behaviors of another group in order to show respect and good will, only to be rejected and ridiculed by another who finds the behaviors presumptuous and inappropriate. Which individual is most like you? Can you understand and empathize with the point of view of the other?

One person may find relief and release by venting rage over a controversial issue, while another might find this angry behavior shocking and bewildering because s/he does not understand the full scope of the feelings engendered by experiences of discrimination. Which individual is most like you? Can you understand and empathize with the point of view of the other?

Grief and pain are overwhelming to some individuals who have experienced oppression, while these emotions seem exaggerated and overdramatized to those who have not experienced the full impact of systematic discrimination first hand. Which individual is most like you? Can you understand and empathize with the point of view of the other?

Anxiety and guilt cause denial in those who have been privileged, while denial reaffirms the existence of systematic discrimination and mistreatment to those for
whom oppression has been a way of life. Which individual is most like you? Can you understand and empathize with the point of view of the other?

These three orientations to diversity can provide insight about the spectrum of expectations, feelings, and assumptions that surround daily relationships with others in a diverse society. The human multicultural experiment that faces us in the twenty-first century provides an immense challenge to humankind. The best chance for meeting this challenge comes from a better understanding of how really varied the emotional and intellectual contexts of diversity interaction can be, and how different people experience it.

REFERENCES


ESSENTIALISM AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

As mentioned earlier, in the United States we have a system of stratification that is based on many categories of difference, including race/ethnicity, social class, sex/gender, and sexuality. We tend to view this system as fixed because of our assumptions that these categories are unchangeable. Such assumptions are common in a belief in essentialism—the tenet that human behavior is “natural,” predetermined by genetic, biological, or physiological mechanisms and thus not subject to change. Human behaviors that show some similarity are assumed to be expressions of an underlying human drive or tendency. In the United States, gender and sexuality are among the last realms to have their natural or biological status called into question. For most of us, essentialism informs the way we think about such things as gender and remains the hegemonic or culturally dominant belief in our culture. For example, many of us attribute great importance to what we perceive as biological differences between women and men and see them as central to the organization of human society. Essentialism guides the way we order our social world and determines what we value as well as what we devalue.

This text proceeds from a different perspective, however. As you read the selections in Part I, you will note that they all begin with the premise that categories such as race/ethnicity, social class, sex/gender, and sexuality are socially constructed. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, on whose work this premise is based, state that “social order is not part of the ‘nature of things,’ and it cannot be derived from the ‘laws of nature.’ Social order exists only as a product of human activity” (1966, p. 52). Social construction theory suggests that what we see as “real” (in this case, cultural categories of difference and systems of inequality) is the result of human interaction. Through such interaction we create aspects of our culture, objectify them, internalize them, and then take these cultural products for granted. A suitable companion to critical thinking, social construction theory encourages us to ask new questions but does not imply a particular answer. Using a critical thinking framework based on the notion of social construction requires that we be committed to asking questions and challenging assumptions that impair our ability even to imagine these questions.

Adopting a framework based on social construction theory means understanding that we are not born with a sense of what it means to be male, female, or intersexual; with a disability or not; black, Latina/o, Asian, white, or Native American; gay, straight, asexual, or bisexual; or rich, working-class, poor, or middle-class. We learn about these categories through social interaction, and we are given meanings and values for these categories by our social institutions, peers, and families. What we learn depends on the culture in which we live as well as our place within that culture. Further, how we are defined by our culture often determines how we experience our social world. As W. I.
Thomas noted, if we "define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (1966, p. 301). For example, when we define one group as inferior to another, this does not make that group inferior, yet it may result in their being experienced as inferior. To illustrate this, consider the vicious cycle that results from the assignment of substandard resources to people who are poor. For example, low-income housing is generally located in geographic areas that lack quality resources such as good public schools and access to adequate health care. Lacking such quality resources results in further social disadvantage, which can perpetuate the poverty of this group. Thus, although reality is initially soft as it is constructed, it can become hard in its effects. We will examine these effects throughout this text.

According to Berger and Luckmann, reality is socially constructed in three stages. In the first stage, externalization, we create cultural products through social interaction. These cultural products may be material artifacts, social institutions, or values or beliefs concerning a particular group. When these products are created, they become "external" to those who have produced them; they become products outside ourselves. For example, as Judith Lorber describes in Reading 9, "The Social Construction of Gender," the construction of gender identity starts at birth with placement within a sex category (male or female). Through dress and adornment, others become aware of the sex of the child and they treat the child according to the gendered expectations they have for that particular sex. Children then behave and respond differently because of the different treatment they receive. A situation defined as real thus becomes real in its consequences. Girls and boys are taught to act differently from each other and thus do act differently. As a result, boys and girls are seen as being different from each other.

A second example of externalization can be found in the first reading, "Racial Formations," by Michael Omi and Howard Winant. They note that the concept of race has varied over history and is subject to a great deal of debate: Using the term racial formation, they describe "the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they shape racial meanings." The example cited at the beginning of this essay clearly illustrates the social forces involved in determining racial categories. The recognition of a multiracial identity involves more than individuals being identified as multiracial. Rather, interaction that takes place at the social, economic, and political levels serves to construct such categories of race.

The second stage, objectivation, occurs when the products created in the first stage appear to take on a reality of their own, becoming independent of those who created them. People lose awareness that they themselves are the authors of their social and cultural environment and of their interpretations of reality. They feel as if the products have an objective existence, and they become another part of reality to be taken for granted. For example, most of us take race categories for granted, employing an essentialist perspective that views race categories as the result of biological or genetic factors. However, as mentioned earlier, a variety of social, economic, and political forces are involved in the construction of race categories. When we forget our part in the social construction of race, or fail to recognize the social forces that operate to construct race categories and the meanings associated with them, these categories take on objective realities. The objective realities that many of us attribute to racial categories can be seen in the findings of the recent census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Nationwide, 2.5 percent of respondents identified themselves as being of mixed race. The reasons for such a low response rate vary from lack of knowledge of the options to a strong identification with one race, regardless of one's multiracial heritage. These
findings demonstrate that most respondents hold on to what they see as the objective reality of clear and mutually exclusive race categories.

In the final stage, internalization, we learn the supposedly "objective facts" about the cultural products that have been created. This occurs primarily through socialization, the process of social interaction in which one learns the ways of the society and one's specific roles—the sets of rules and expectations attached to a social position (or status) in that society. In this stage we make these "facts" part of our subjective consciousness. Because of the process of internalization, members of the same culture share an understanding of reality and rarely question the origins of their beliefs or the processes by which the beliefs arose. For example, as Gregory Mantsios discusses in Reading 6, "Media Magic: Making Class Invisible," the mass media serves as a very powerful tool for shaping the way we think. A significant part of our culture, mass media operates as a very important socialization mechanism. What we see presented in the mass media, as well as how it is presented, delivers important messages about who and what is or is not valued. Specifically, mass media helps us to internalize certain constructs about class in our society, perpetuating a variety of myths. Among these myths are that poverty is not a significant problem in this country, that those who are poor have only themselves to blame, that we are a middle-class society, and that blue-collar and union workers are to blame for declining economic security. As mass media presents us with these images, we develop a particular view of the class structure in our country. In addition, we internalize beliefs about members of a specific class (e.g., the poor are lazy) as if they were objective facts. The role of the media in maintaining constructions of difference and the resulting systems of inequality will be explored in Part II of this text.

It is important to note here that viewing cultural products as being produced in stages does not imply that the creation of reality occurs in a neat and overt progression. In some cases, the process of externalization in the creation of a social category is clear, as shown in Jonathan Katz's discussion in "The Invention of Heterosexuality" (Reading 13) of the creation of a "heterosexual identity." However, the construction of reality is not always such a clear process. Thinking in terms of a cultural product as produced in stages, though, provides a general understanding of how the knowledge that guides our behavior is established and how it becomes a part of culture and common sense. In addition, it is important to be aware that while categories of difference are being constructed and subsequently transformed into systems of inequality, such systems of inequality are often being maintained by the same social forces and practices. To clearly understand how categories of difference become systems of inequality, we begin by examining the processes that construct them. The social factors that serve to maintain these constructs and their corresponding systems of inequality will be examined in detail in Part II.

WHAT CONSTRUCTS CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE?

The readings in this text explore how the categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed and transformed into systems of inequality. The preceding in-depth explanation of social construction theory was intended to give us an understanding of how these categories are socially constructed. To thoroughly comprehend this process, however, it is important to understand what social factors are at work in creating these categories.

Simply put, categories of difference are the result of human activity guided by the values of our culture. When parents teach their child how to behave like a "lady" or act like a "gentleman," when one child labels another
a "sissy" or a "fag," or when a girl decides to stop playing "rough" to avoid being labeled a "tomboy"—each is engaged in the process of creating categories of difference. We take these everyday actions for granted, but they play a fundamental role in how we view the world. The kinds of categories we create, as well as the meanings we give to them, are guided by our cultural values regarding who or what is important.

This process of creating these categories occurs in a variety of contexts that we encounter every day. Perhaps the most significant of these is the institutional context. A family is the set of rules and relationships that govern the social activities in which we participate to meet our basic needs. The major social institutions that we will examine are:

**The family:** responsible for reproducing and socializing and protecting the young, regulating sexual behavior, and providing emotional comfort and support for its members.

**Education:** responsible for teaching members of society the knowledge, skills, and values considered most important for the survival of the individual as well as society.

**The economy:** creates, controls, and distributes the human and material resources of a society.

**The state:** possesses the legal power to regulate the behavior of members of that society, as well as the relationship of that society to others.

**The media:** responsible for supplying members of society with information, for reinforcing the policies of other institutions, and for socializing members of society with regard to appropriate ways of behaving and accepted cultural values.

From the policies and practices of each of these institutions, influenced by our cultural values, categories of difference are created. Thus, when parents teach their child how to behave like a "lady" or act like a "gentleman," they create categories of difference within the institutional context of the family.

Another context in which we create categories of difference is the interpersonal context—our daily interactions with others. In these interactions we rely on common guidelines for behavior (norms) to define situations and create these categories. For example, when an individual, operating on stereotypes based on race and ethnicity, labels another a "foreigner," she or he is relying on what are assumed images of what is an "American." As a result, she or he creates categories of difference within an interpersonal context.

Finally, we create categories of difference in internal contexts by internalizing the values and beliefs established in institutional and interpersonal contexts. When a girl decides to stop playing "rough" to avoid being labeled a "tomboy," she is internalizing the ideas of what it means to be a girl that were taught to her by her family as well as her peers.

**CONSTRUCTING RACE AND ETHNICITY**

The institution of the state, which determines how the census should be taken and how individuals should be counted, plays an integral role in defining race categories in an institutional context. Race denotes a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as possessing distinctive
hereditary traits. Ethnicity denotes a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as sharing cultural traits such as language, religion, family customs, and food preferences. As Omi and Winant illustrate in “Racial Formations,” what is important about the construction of race categories is not necessarily our perception of our own race but the recognition by social institutions of our membership in that race category. Furthermore, racial and ethnic categories are significant in that they are constructed in a hierarchy from “superior” to “inferior.” Karen Brodkin Sacks explains in “How Jews Became White” (Reading 4) that Jewish people, as well as some other immigrants to the United States in the late 19th century, were once seen as belonging to an inferior race. The institutions of the economy and the state, as well as others, played an integral role in constructing them as inferior and in later “reconstructing” them as white and no longer an inferior race. Further, as Ibish illustrates in “They Are Absolutely Obsessed with Us” (Reading 3), the institutions of the state and the media have constructed Arabs as “other” and “the enemy.” Both authors illustrate that such processes of construction are tied to economic and political changes in the United States.

Racial categories are also constructed in interpersonal contexts. As Waters discusses in “Optional Ethnicities” (Reading 2), many of us, but particularly whites, will ask someone whose race or ethnicity is not immediately apparent, “What are you?” We do not, however, generally ask such a question of those whom we perceive to be white. Thus, in our efforts to define others we not only attempt to construct distinct racial categories but we also create white as an “unmarked” category and as a standard against which all others are judged.

Finally, race is constructed in internal contexts, where we reinforce those categories and the meanings associated with them within ourselves. This process is particularly evident when a person of color who is light-skinned attempts or desires to “pass” as a white person. Through internalizing the idea that to be other than white is to be less valued, they participate in constructing race categories as well as the meanings associated with them.

CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL CLASS

The categories of social class are also constructed within institutional contexts. Although we may view social class as a result of how much income (wages and salaries from earnings and investments) and wealth (the total amount of valuable goods) a person possesses, it is in fact more than this. What class we belong to and is determined not just by how much money we have or the material possessions we own but also by the institutions of our society, including state policies and the structuring of the economy. For example, definitions of poverty created by the government affect the access some members of our society have to certain important resources. The “Thrifty Food Plan”—the least costly of four nutritionally adequate plans designed by the Department of Agriculture, based on their 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey—demonstrates how the establishment of the poverty line—an annual income level below which a person or family was defined as poor and therefore entitled to certain benefits—creates who is seen as poor. The poverty line is problematic, however, in the way it is determined because it relies on material standards of the 1950s rather than contemporary standards. As a result, while the government determined in 2000 that the poverty line for a family of four was $17,603, a more accurate calculation, employing contemporary standards, would have been $30,000. The more accurate figure would result in doubling the number of individuals defined as poor. As institutions establish definitions and measures, they determine a person’s ac-
cess to resources (i.e., the ability of people living in poverty to receive government aid). In this way, constructions of class provide the foundation for a system of inequitably distributed resources. The impact of such a system will be discussed in greater detail later in this text.

In addition to establishing who is poor, social institutions also function to establish who is wealthy, as illustrated by Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro in “Race, Wealth, and Equality” (Reading 5). Furthermore, as Holly Sklar, Chuck Collins, and Betsy Leondar-Wright discuss in Reading 7, the state, influenced by the economy, creates a social class stratification system that is increasingly divided by a “wealth gap.” Finally, the values that we place on members of social classes are further influenced by social institutions such as the media, as explained by Gregory Matsios in “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible.” According to Matsios those who control the media (i.e., the upper class) can use this institution to create class divisions as well as define our attitudes about members of different social classes. All of these articles clearly illustrate that the rules, practices, and policies of social institutions serve to construct categories of class differences and establish a system of class inequality.

Categories of social class are also constructed in interpersonal contexts. We define who is rich, poor, middle-class, and so forth, in our interactions with others. In addition, we attach meanings to each of these categories. For example, if we see a well-dressed, “clean-cut” individual driving an expensive car, we not only may judge this individual as belonging to the upper class but we may also admire her or him and the class position we assume she or he has achieved. On the other hand, if we observe people purchasing groceries with food stamps and then taking the bus, we not only judge them as poor but are also likely to think less of them as a result of their presumed class. In each of these instances, we rely on stereotypes—rigid, oversimplified, often exaggerated beliefs that are applied both to an entire category of people and to each individual in it. As a result of stereotypes we treat individuals according to the values we attribute to these classes.

It is likely that the individuals in the preceding examples would be aware of the assumptions made about them on the basis of their social class. Matsios illustrates that such stereotypes about class dominate our media. As these individuals internalize these messages, they impact their sense of self-worth. In addition, these individuals aid in creating categories of class and the meanings associated with them.

CONSTRUCTING SEX AND GENDER

Categories of sex and gender are also socially constructed in institutional contexts. This claim may, at first glance, seem quite strange. Whether or not a person is female or male is generally seen as a biological condition. However, as Judith Lorber in “The Social Construction of Gender” and Anne Fausto-Sterling in “The Five Sexes” (Reading 10) discuss, the categories of male and female are not always sufficient to describe the variety of sexes that exist in reality. As Fausto-Sterling points out, individuals born intersexual—the physical manifestation of genital/genetic/endocrinological differentiation that is viewed as different from the norm—may constitute as much as 4 percent of live births. However, these infants are placed in a program of hormonal and surgical management almost immediately after birth so that they can become “normal” males or females in society. Thus, the institutions of science and medicine and advances in physiology and surgical technology aid in constructing a reality in which there are only two sexes.
What is significant about sex—the genetic (and sometimes scientific) determination of male and female—is the corresponding expectations that we place on people occupying these categories with regard to gender—the socially defined roles expected of males and females. As Lorber and others clearly explain, gender constructs are created and justified by a variety of institutions, including the family, the state, and the economy. Thus, gender constructs are transformed into a gender system in which men and masculinity are at the top of the hierarchy and women and femininity are at the bottom. Our ideas about gender therefore influence the way people are sorted into social positions. For example, our expectations of women to be feminine and our corresponding assumptions about their ability to handle certain kinds of strenuous or stressful work contribute to the underrepresentation of women as CEOs and heads of governing bodies. Similarly, our expectations that males be masculine and our corresponding assumption that they are less able to be nurturing contribute to their being less likely to pursue careers as nurses or elementary school teachers, for example. Because such a gendered division of labor is established in a society that is based on patriarchy—a form of social organization in which males dominate females—what results is not only a gendered division of labor but an occupational hierarchy in which the work of men is valued over that of women.

Further examples of how we construct categories of difference are found in interpersonal contexts. We construct these categories by acting out the two polar sex categories and fulfilling the corresponding gendered expectations that have been constructed by the social institutions of the family, education, and others. As West and Zimmerman (1987) note, we do gender through our attempts to define others and through our expectations that others display appropriate gender identity. Similar to the ways in which we view race, we are often frustrated with ambiguities of sex and gender. If the sex/gender of another individual does not fit our expectations of opposite sex categories with corresponding gendered behavior, we often seek to define the person, again asking, “What are you?” In so doing we aid in the process of constructing a sex/gender system that allows for only two sexes and requires gender categories to be distinct and polar opposites.

Finally, gender is also created in internal contexts. As Michael Kimmel illustrates in “Masculinity as Homophobia” (Reading 12), males often insecure with their “manhood” will often act as “bullies” to prove their manhood, not only to others but to themselves. As this reading illustrates, feelings of alienation—a sense of not belonging to the culture or the community (as in the case with males fearing they will be labeled “sissy” if they do not “act like men”)—as well as feelings of self-alienation—hatred for one’s own position and oneself—also play a significant role in how we create these categories within ourselves. As a result, we often perpetuate the ways in which these categories are constructed in other contexts.

CONSTRUCTING SEXUALITY

Categories of sexuality are also constructed within institutional contexts. Claims that sexuality is constructed may at first appear as strange as claims of sex being a social construct. Just as we generally recognize only two categories of sex, we often recognize sexuality as existing in only two opposing categories: gay and straight. Furthermore, we tend to see these categories as polar opposites, with each fundamentally different from the other. However, as Jonathan Katz notes in “The Invention of Heterosexuality,” current notions of sexuality are but one way of imagining the social relations of the sexes.
Like all of the previously discussed categories, sexuality is, in fact, a very complex yet culturally defined construct. Sexuality can involve attraction on a physical, emotional, and social level as well as fantasies, sexual behaviors, and self-identity (Klein, 1978). However, just as we may be required to distill our variations in racial and ethnic heritage into one of a few categories, we are often required to place all of the varying aspects of our sexuality into one of two categories. Thus, a complex part of who we are becomes socially defined within rigid and limiting constructs.

As Katz illustrates through his exploration of changes in the institutions of the economy and of work, religion, and science and medicine, social institutions influence the ways in which we construct categories of sexuality. Again, what is significant about categories of sexuality is that they are transformed into systems of inequality, where one form of sexuality is valued and viewed as more appropriate than others. For example, in the United States the policies and practices of the federal government recognize some forms of sexuality and not others (as in the Defense of Marriage Act, which allows states to exclude same-sex couples from the right to marry). Such recognition, or the lack thereof, serves to grant access to resources to heterosexuals but to deny them to lesbians and gays, thus creating systems of inequality.

We also create different sexuality categories in interpersonal contexts. Susan Bordo describes in "Pills and Power Tools" (Reading 14) how our language often reflects the expectations that men will sexually perform. As Kate Bornstein notes in "Naming All the Parts" (Reading 16), constructions of sexuality are culturally linked to constructions of gender. Each of these readings illustrates not only how constructions of difference in institutional contexts are reflected in interpersonal interactions, but also how the social construction of one category of difference is generally dependent on the social construction of another. The interrelatedness of various constructions of difference will be addressed later.

We also create categories of sexuality in internal contexts. Again, this is generally done in response to the ways sexuality is defined in the larger society. As Paula Rust illustrates in "Sexual Identity and Bisexual Identities" (Reading 15), our descriptions of sexuality divisions and our own membership in them are determined by the "sexual landscape" of the culture and what are viewed as appropriate or available categories. As we define ourselves, we perpetuate the ways in which these categories are created in other contexts.

In summary, the construction of categories of difference occurs within a variety of contexts. The readings in Part I illustrate this process. In addition, they demonstrate how the meanings we attach to these categories result in structures of inequality.

WHY CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE?

Often the most difficult aspect of understanding the construction of categories of difference is not the how or what but the why. We have difficulty understanding why such categories are created and transformed into systems of inequality. Many explanations regarding why categories of difference and their corresponding hierarchies are constructed have been offered from a variety of perspectives.

The readings in Part I offer a variety of explanations. For example, Omi and Winant in "Racial Formations" discuss some of the reasons European explorers created separate categories for the people who were indigenous to the lands that they "discovered." They explain that when the European explor-
ers came upon people who looked different from them, their assumptions about the origin of the human species were called into question. As a result, religious debates regarding creation and whether or not God created a single species of humanity led to questions about whether or not the natives of the New World could be “saved” as well as about how they should be treated. By deeming the European settlers as children of God and indigenous people “other,” the European settlers not only were able to maintain their worldview but were also able to justify systems of mistreatment, including slavery, coercive labor, and extermination.

Social theorists also offer explanations regarding why elements of social structure work to create systems of stratification. For example, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (1945) assert, in what has come to be known as the Davis-Moore thesis, that social stratification is a universal pattern because it has beneficial consequences for the operation of society. This is the case, they reason, because societal inequality has important functions for social organization. They note that society is a complex system of many occupational positions, each of which has a particular importance. Some jobs, they argue, are easy to do (with a little instruction) and can be performed by just about anyone. Others are far more challenging and can only be accomplished by certain people who possess certain scarce talents. Functionally speaking, according to Davis and Moore, the latter positions of high day-to-day responsibility are the most important.

Other social theorists argue, however, that such a perspective is too conservative and fails to point out the inequality and exploitation of such systems of stratification. Thus, they argue that social stratification is a system by which some people gain advantages at the expense of others. Karl Marx (1959), for example, contended that systems of class stratification involve inequality and exploitation and are created so that capitalists can maximize their profits. He went on to say that the economy has primary importance as the social institution with the greatest influence on the rest of society. Other institutions also create systems of stratification but do so, in general, to support the operation of the economy.

Still other theorists, such as Marilyn Frye (1983), argue that the social construction of difference is initiated with the purpose of discrimination and oppression—a relationship in which the dominant group benefits from the systematic abuse, exploitation, and injustice directed at a subordinate group. Thus, the construction of difference is not arbitrary but systematically created and transformed into systems of inequality in an effort to advantage some at the expense of others. The roles of domination and subordination in the construction of difference and the maintenance of inequality will be addressed in greater detail in Part II.
White Privilege Shapes the U.S.

Robert Jensen

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WHITES IS A FACT OF LIFE

Here's what white privilege sounds like:

I'm sitting in my University of Texas office, talking to a very bright and very conservative white student about affirmative action in college admissions, which he opposes and I support.

The student says he wants a level playing field with no unearned advantages for anyone. I ask him whether he thinks that being white has advantages in the United States. Have either of us, I ask, ever benefited from being white in a world run mostly by white people? Yes, he concedes, there is something real and tangible we could call white privilege.

So, if we live in a world of white privilege—unearned white privilege—how does that affect your notion of a level playing field, I asked.

He paused for a moment and said, "That really doesn't matter."

That statement, I suggested to him, reveals the ultimate white privilege: the privilege to acknowledge that you have unearned privilege but to ignore what it means.

That exchange led me to rethink the way I talk about race and racism with students. It drove home the importance of confronting the dirty secret that we white people carry around with us every day in a world of white privilege, some of what we have is unearned. I think much of both the fear and anger that come up around discussions of affirmative action has its roots in that secret. So these days, my goal is to talk openly and honestly about white supremacy and white privilege.

White privilege, like any social phenomenon, is complex. In a white supremacist culture, all white people have privilege, whether or not they are overtly racist themselves.

There are general patterns, but such privilege plays out differently depending on context and other aspects of one's identity (in my case, being male gives me other kinds of privilege). Rather than try to tell others how white privilege has played out in their lives, I talk about how it has affected me.

I am as white as white gets in this country. I am of northern European heritage and I was raised in North Dakota, one of the whitest states in the country. I grew up in a virtually all-white world surrounded by racism, both personal and institutional. Because I didn't live near a reservation, I didn't even have exposure to the state's only numerically significant nonwhite population, American Indians.

I have struggled to resist that racist training and the racism of my culture. I like to think I have changed, even though I routinely trip over the lingering effects of that internalized racism and the institutional racism around me. But no matter how much I "fix" myself, one thing never changes—I walk through the world with white privilege.
What does that mean? Perhaps most important, when I seek admission to a university, apply for a job, or hunt for an apartment, I don’t look threatening. Almost all of the people evaluating me for those things look like me—they are white. They see in me a reflection of themselves—and in a racist world, that is an advantage. I smile. I am white. I am one of them. I am not dangerous. Even when I voice critical opinions, I am cut some slack. After all, I’m white.

My flaws also are more easily forgiven because I am white. Some complain that affirmative action has meant the university is saddled with mediocre minority professors. I have no doubt there are minority faculty who are mediocre, though I don’t know very many. As Henry Louis Gates Jr. once pointed out, if affirmative action policies were in place for the next hundred years, it’s possible that at the end of that time the university could have as many mediocre minority professors as it has mediocre white professors. That isn’t meant as an insult to anyone, but it’s a simple observation that white privilege has meant that scores of second-rate white professors have slid through the system because their flaws were overlooked out of solidarity based on race, as well as on gender, class and ideology.

Some people resist the assertions that the United States is still a bitterly racist society and that the racism has real effects on real people. But white folks have long cut other white folks a break. I know, because I am one of them. I am not a genius—as I like to say, I’m not the sharpest knife in the drawer. I have been teaching full time for six years and I’ve published a reasonable amount of scholarship. Some of it is the unexceptional stuff one churns out to get tenure, and some of it, I would argue, is worth reading. I worked hard, and I like to think that I’m a fairly decent teacher. Every once in a while, I leave my office at the end of the day feeling like I really accomplished something. When I cash my paycheck, I don’t feel guilty.

But, all that said, I know I did not get where I am by merit alone, I benefited from, among other things, white privilege. That doesn’t mean that I don’t deserve my job, or that if I weren’t white I would never have gotten the job. It means simply that all through my life, I have soaked up benefits for being white. I grew up in fertile farm country taken by force from nonwhite indigenous people. I was educated in a well-funded, virtually all-white public school system in which I learned that white people like me made this country great. There I also was taught a variety of skills, including how to take standardized tests written by and for white people.

All my life I have been hired for jobs by white people. I was accepted for graduate school by white people. And I was hired for a teaching position by the predominantly white University of Texas, headed by a white president, in a college headed by a white dean and in a department with a white chairman that at the time had one nonwhite tenured professor.

There certainly is individual variation in experience. Some white people have had it easier than I, probably because they came from wealthy families that gave them even more privilege. Some white people have had it tougher than I because they came from poorer families. White women face discrimination I will never know. But, in the end, white people all have drawn on white privilege somewhere in their lives.

Like anyone, I have overcome certain hardships in my life. I have worked hard to get where I am, and I work hard to stay there. But to feel good about myself and my work, I do not have to believe that “merit,” as defined by white people in a white country, alone got me here. I can acknowledge that in addition to all that hard work, I got a significant boost from white privilege, which continues to protect me every day of my life from certain hardships.
At one time in my life, I would not have been able to say that, because I
needed to believe that my success in life was due solely to my individual tal-
et and effort. I saw myself as the heroic American, the rugged individualist.
I was so deeply seduced by the culture's mythology that I couldn't see the
fear that was binding me to those myths. Like all white Americans, I was liv-
ing with the fear that maybe I didn't really deserve my success, that maybe
luck and privilege had more to do with it than brains and hard work. I was
afraid I wasn't heroic or rugged, that I wasn't special.

I let go of some of that fear when I realized that, indeed, I wasn't special,
but that I was still me. What I do well, I still can take pride in, even when I
know that the rules under which I work are stacked to my benefit. I believe
that until we let go of the fiction that people have complete control over their
fate—that we can will ourselves to be anything we choose—then we will live
with that fear: Yes, we should all dream big and pursue our dreams and not
let anyone or anything stop us. But we all are the product of both what we
will ourselves to be and what the society in which we live lets us be.

White privilege is not something I get to decide whether I want to keep.
Every time I walk into a store at the same time as a black man and the secur-
ity guard follows him and leaves me alone to shop, I am benefiting from
white privilege. There is not space here to list all the ways in which white
privilege plays out in our daily lives, but it is clear that I will carry this priv-
ilege with me until the day white supremacy is erased from this society.

Frankly, I don't think I will live to see that day; I am realistic about the
scope of the task. However, I continue to have hope, to believe in the cre-
ative power of human beings to engage the world honestly and act
morally. A first step for white people, I think, is to not be afraid to admit
that we have benefited from white privilege. It doesn't mean we are frauds
who have no claim to our success. It means we face a choice about what we
do with our success.
Driving While Black

John Lamberth

In 1993, I was contacted by attorneys whose clients had been arrested on the New Jersey Turnpike for possession of drugs. They told me they had come across 25 African American defendants over a three-year period, all arrested on the same stretch of turnpike in Gloucester County, but not a single white defendant. I was asked whether, and how much, this pattern reflected unfair treatment of blacks.

They wanted to know what a professional statistician would make of these numbers. What were the probabilities that this pattern could occur naturally, that is, by chance? Since arrests for drug offenses occurred after traffic stops on the highway, was it possible that so many blacks were arrested because the police were disproportionately stopping them? I decided to try to answer their questions and embarked on one of the most intriguing statistical studies of my career: a census of traffic and traffic violators by race on Interstate 95 in New Jersey. It would require a careful design, teams of researchers with binoculars and a rolling survey.

To relieve your suspense, the answer was that the rate at which blacks were stopped was greatly disproportionate to their numbers on the road and to their propensity to violate traffic laws. Those findings were central to a March 1996 ruling by Judge Robert E. Francis of the Superior Court of New Jersey that the state police were de facto targeting blacks, in violation of their rights under the U.S. and New Jersey constitutions. The judge suppressed the evidence gathered in the stops.

New Jersey is now appealing the case.

The New Jersey litigation is part of a broad attack in a number of states, including Maryland, on what has been dubbed the offense of “DWB”—driving while black. While this problem has been familiar anecdotally to African Americans and civil rights advocates for years, there is now evidence that highway patrols are singling out blacks for stops on the illegal and incorrect theory that the practice, known as racial profiling, is the most likely to yield drug arrests. Statistical techniques are proving extremely helpful in proving targeting, just as they have been in proving systemic discrimination in employment.

This was not my first contact with the disparate treatment of blacks in the criminal justice system. My academic research over the past 25 years had led me from an interest in small group decision-making to jury selection, jury composition, and the application of the death penalty. I became aware that blacks were disproportionately charged with crimes, particularly serious ones; that they were underrepresented on jury panels and thus on juries; and that they were sentenced to death at a much greater rate than their numbers could justify.

As I began the New Jersey study, I knew from experience that any research that questioned police procedures was sensitive. I knew that what I did must stand the test of a court hearing in which every move I made would be challenged by experts.

First, I had to decide what I needed to know. What was the black “population” of the road—that is, how many of the people traveling on the turnpike over a given period of time were African American? This task is a far cry from determining the population of a town, city or state. There are no Census Bureau figures. The population of a roadway changes all day, every day. By sampling the population of the roadway over a given period, I could make an accurate determination of the average number of blacks on the road.

I designed and implemented two surveys. We stationed observers by the side of the road, with the assignment of counting the number of cars and the race of the occupants in randomly selected three-hour blocks of time over a two-week period. The New Jersey Turnpike has four lanes at its southern end, two in each direction. By the side of the road, we placed an observer for each lane, equipped with binoculars to observe and note the number of cars and the race of occupants, along with a person to write down what
the observers said. The team observed for an hour and a half, took a 30-minute break while moving to another observation point, and repeated the process.

In total, we conducted more than 21 sessions between 8 A.M. and 8 P.M. from June 11 to June 24, 1993, at four sites between Exits 1 and 3 of the turnpike, among the busiest highway segments in the nation. We counted roughly 43,000 cars, of which 13.5 percent had one or more black occupants. This was consistent with the population figures for the 11 states from which most of the vehicles observed were registered.

For the rolling survey, Fred Last, a public defender, drove at a constant 60 mph (5 mph above the speed limit at the time). He counted all cars that passed him as violators and all cars he passed as nonviolators. Speaking into a tape recorder, he also noted the race of the driver of each car. At the end of each day, he collated his results and fixed them to me.

Last counted 2,096 cars. More than 98 percent were speeding and thus subject to being stopped by police. African Americans made up about 15 percent of those drivers on the turnpike violating traffic laws. Utilizing data from the New Jersey State Police, I determined that about 35 percent of those who were stopped on this part of the turnpike were African Americans.

To summarize: African Americans made up 13.5 percent of the turnpike’s population and 15 percent of the speeders. But they represented 35 percent of those pulled over. In stark numbers, blacks were 4.85 times as likely to be stopped as were others.

We did not obtain data on the race of drivers and passengers searched after being stopped or on the rate at which vehicles were searched. But we know from police records that 73.2 percent of those arrested along the turnpike over a 3½-year period by troopers from the area’s Mooresstown barracks were black—making them 16.5 times more likely to be arrested than others.

Attorneys for the 25 African Americans who had been arrested on the turnpike and charged with possessing drugs or guns filed motions to suppress evidence seized when they were stopped, arguing that police stopped them because of their race. Their motions were consolidated and heard by Judge Francis between November 1994 and May 1995. My statistical study, bolstered by an analysis of its validity by Joseph B. Kadane, professor of statistics at Carnegie Mellon University, was the primary exhibit in support of the motions.

But Francis also heard testimony from two former New Jersey troopers who said they had been coached to make race-based “profile” stops to increase their criminal arrests. And the judge reviewed police in-service training aids such as videos that disproportionately portrayed minorities as perpetrators.

The statistical disparities, Francis wrote, are “indeed stark. . . . Defendants have proven at least a de facto policy on the part of the State Police . . . of targeting blacks for investigation and arrest.” The judge ordered that the state’s evidence be suppressed.

My own work in this field continues. In 1992, Robert L. Wilkins was riding in a rented car with family members when Maryland State Police stopped them, ordered them out, and conducted a search for drugs, which were not found. Wilkins happened to be a Harvard Law School trained public defender in Washington. With the support of the Maryland ACLU, he sued the state police, who settled the case with, among other things, an agreement to provide highway-stop data to the organization.

I was asked by the ACLU to evaluate the Maryland data in 1996 and again in 1997. I conducted a rolling survey in Maryland similar to the one I had done before and found a similar result. While 17.5 percent of the traffic violators on I-95 north of Baltimore were African American, 28.8 percent of those stopped and 71.3 percent of those searched by the Maryland State Police were African American. U.S. District Judge Catherine Blake ultimately ruled in 1997 that the ACLU made a “reasonable showing” that Maryland troopers on I-95 were continuing to engage in a “pattern and practice” of racial discrimination. Other legal actions have been filed in Pennsylvania, Florida, Indiana and North Carolina. Police officials everywhere deny racial profiling.

Why, then, are so many more African American motorists stopped than would be expected by their frequency on the road and their violation of the law? It seems clear to me that drugs are the issue.

The notion that African Americans and other minorities are more likely than whites to be carrying drugs—a notion that is perpetuated by some police training films—seems to be especially prevalent among the police. They believe that if they are to interdict drugs, then it makes sense to stop minorities, especially young men. State police are rewarded and promoted at least partially on the basis of their “criminal pro-
grams," which means the number of arrests they make. Testimony in the New Jersey case pointed out that troopers would be considered deficient if they did not make enough arrests. Since, as Judge Francis found, training points to minorities as likely drug dealers, it makes a certain sort of distorted sense to stop minorities more than whites.

But there is no untainted evidence that minorities are more likely to possess or sell drugs. There is evidence to the contrary. Indirect evidence in statistics from the National Institute of Drug Abuse indicates that 12 percent to 14 percent of those who abuse drugs are African American, a percentage that is proportionate to their numbers in the general population.

More telling are the numbers of those people who are stopped and searched by the Maryland State Police who have drugs. This data, which has been unobtainable from other states, indicates that of those drivers and passengers searched in Maryland, about 28 percent have contraband, whether they are black or white. The same percentage of contraband is found no matter the race.

The Maryland data may shed some light on the tendency of some troopers to believe that blacks are somehow more likely to possess contraband. This data shows that for every 1,000 searches by the Maryland State Police, 200 blacks and only 80 non-blacks are arrested. This could lead one to believe that more blacks are breaking the law—until you know that the sample is deeply skewed. Of those searched, 713 were black and only 287 were non-black.

We do not have comparable figures on contraband possession or arrests from New Jersey. But if the traffic along I-95 there is at all similar to I-95 in Maryland—and there is a strong numerical basis to believe it is—it is possible to speculate that black travelers in New Jersey also were no more likely than non-blacks to be carrying contraband.

The fact that a black was 16.5 times more likely than a non-black to be arrested on the New Jersey Turnpike now takes on added meaning. Making only the assumption that was shown accurate in Maryland, it is possible to say even more conclusively that racial profiling is prevalent there and that there is no benefit to police in singling out blacks. More important, even if there were a benefit, it would violate fundamental rights. The constitution does not permit law enforcement authorities to target groups by race.

Fundamental fairness demands that steps be taken to prohibit profiling in theory and in practice. There is legislation pending at the federal level and in at least two states, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, that would require authorities to keep statistics on this issue. This is crucial legislation and should be passed.

Only when the data are made available and strong steps are taken to monitor and curtail profiling, will we be able to assure minorities, and all of us who care about fundamental rights, that this practice will cease.
The Invention of Heterosexuality

Jonathan Ned Katz

Heterosexuality is old as procreation, ancient as the lust of Eve and Adam. That first lady and gentleman, we assume, perceived themselves, behaved, and felt just like today’s heterosexuals. We suppose that heterosexuality is unchanging, universal, essential: ahistorical.

Contrary to that common sense conjecture, the concept of heterosexuality is only one particular historical way of perceiving, categorizing, and imagining the social relations of the sexes. Not ancient at all, the idea of heterosexuality is a modern invention, dating to the late nineteenth century. The heterosexual belief, with its metaphysical claim to eternity, has a particular, pivotal place in the social universe of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that it did not inhabit earlier. This essay traces the historical process by which the heterosexual idea was created as ahistorical and taken-for-granted...

By not studying the heterosexual idea in history, analysts of sex, gay and straight, have continued to privilege the “normal” and “natural” at the expense of the “abnormal” and “unnatural.” Such privileging of the norm accedes to its domination, protecting it from questions. In making the normal the object of a thorough-going historical study we simultaneously pursue a pure truth and a sex-radical and subversive goal: we upset basic preconceptions. We discover that the heterosexual, the normal, and the natural have a history of changing definitions. Studying the history of the term challenges its power.

Contrary to our usual assumption, past Americans and other peoples named, perceived, and socially organized the bodies, lusts, and intercourse of the sexes in ways radically different from the way we do. If we care to understand this vast past sexual diversity, we need to stop promiscuously projecting our own hetero and homo arrangement. Though lip-service is often paid to the distorting, ethnocentric effect of such conceptual imperialism, the category heterosexuality continues to be applied uncritically as a universal analytical tool. Recognizing the time-bound and culturally-specific character of the heterosexual category can help us begin to work toward a thoroughly historical view of sex...

BEFORE HETEROSEXUALITY: EARLY VICTORIAN TRUE LOVE, 1820–1860

In the early nineteenth-century United States, from about 1820 to 1860, the heterosexual did not exist. Middle-class white Americans idealized a True Womanhood, True Manhood, and True Love, all characterized by “purity”—the freedom from sensuality. Presented mainly in literary and religious texts, this True Love was a fine romance with no lascivious kisses. This ideal contrasts strikingly with late-nineteenth and twentieth century American incitements to a heterosex.
Early Victorian True Love was only realized within the mode of proper procreation, marriage, the legal organization for producing a new set of correctly gendered women and men. Proper womanhood, manhood, and progeny—not a normal male-female eros—was the main product of this mode of engendering and of human reproduction.

The actors in this sexual economy were identified as manly men and womanly women and as procreators, not specifically as erotic beings or heterosexuals. Eros did not constitute the core of a heterosexual identity that inhered, democratically, in both men and women. True Women were defined by their distance from lust. True Men, though thought to live closer to carnality, and in less control of it, aspired to the same freedom from concupiscence.

Legitimate natural desire was for procreation and a proper manhood or womanhood; no heteroerotic desire was thought to be directed exclusively and naturally toward the other sex; lust in men was roving. The human body was thought of as a means towards procreation and production; penis and vagina were instruments of reproduction, not of pleasure. Human energy, thought of as a closed and severely limited system, was to be used in producing children and in work, not wasted in libidinous pleasures.

The location of all this engendering and procreative labor was the sacred sanctum of early Victorian True Love, the home of the True Woman and True Man—a temple of purity threatened from within by the monster masturbator, an archetypal early Victorian cult figure of illicit lust. The home of True Love was a castle far removed from the erotic exotic ghetto inhabited most notoriously then by the prostitute, another archetypal Victorian erotic monster...

LATE VICTORIAN SEX-LOVE: 1860–1892

"Heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" did not appear out of the blue in the 1890s. These two eroticisms were in the making from the 1860s on. In late Victorian America and in Germany, from about 1860 to 1892, our modern idea of an eroticized universe began to develop, and the experience of a heterolust began to be widely documented and named...

In the late nineteenth-century United States, several social factors converged to cause the eroticizing of consciousness, behavior, emotion, and identity that became typical of the twentieth-century Western middle class. The transformation of the family from producer to consumer unit resulted in a change in family members' relation to their own bodies; from being an instrument primarily of work, the human body was integrated into a new economy, and began more commonly to be perceived as a means of consumption and pleasure. Historical work has recently begun on how the biological human body is differently integrated into changing modes of production, procreation, engendering, and pleasure so as to alter radically the identity, activity, and experience of that body.2

The growth of a consumer economy also fostered a new pleasure ethic. This imperative challenged the early Victorian work ethic, finally helping to usher in a major transformation of values. While the early Victorian work ethic had touted the value of economic production, that era's procreation ethic had extolled the virtues of human reproduction. In contrast, the late Victorian economic ethic hawked the pleasures of consuming, while its sex ethic praised an erotic pleasure principle for men and even for women.

In the late nineteenth century, the erotic became the raw material for a new consumer culture. Newspapers, books, plays, and films touching on sex, "normal" and "abnormal," became available for a price. Restaurants, bars, and baths opened, catering to sexual consumers with cash. Late Victorian en-
entrepreneurs of desire incited the proliferation of a new eroticism, a commoditized culture of pleasure.

In these same years, the rise in power and prestige of medical doctors allowed these upwardly mobile professionals to prescribe a healthy new sexuality. Medical men, in the name of science, defined a new ideal of male-female relationships that included, in women as well as men, an essential, necessary, normal eroticism. Doctors, who had earlier named and judged the sex-enjoying woman a "nymphomaniac," now began to label women's lack of sexual pleasure a mental disturbance, speaking critically, for example, of female "frigidity" and "anesthesia." ²

By the 1880s, the rise of doctors as a professional group fostered the rise of a new medical model of Normal Love, replete with sexuality. The new Normal Woman and Man were endowed with a healthy libido. The new theory of Normal Love was the modern medical alternative to the old Cult of True Love. The doctors prescribed a new sexual ethic as if it were a morally neutral, medical description of health. The creation of the new Normal Sexual had its counterpart in the invention of the late Victorian Sexual Pervert. The attention paid the sexual abnormal created a need to name the sexual normal, the better to distinguish the average him and her from the deviant it.

HETEROSEXUALITY: THE FIRST YEARS, 1892–1900

In the periodization of heterosexual American history suggested here, the years 1892 to 1900 represent "The First Years" of the heterosexual epoch, eight key years in which the idea of the heterosexual and homosexual were initially and tentatively formulated by U.S. doctors. The earliest-known American use of the word "heterosexual" occurs in a medical journal article by Dr. James G. Kiernan of Chicago, read before the city's medical society on March 7, 1892, and published that May—portentous dates in sexual history. But Dr. Kiernan's heterosexuals were definitely not exemplars of normality. Heterosexuals, said Kiernan, were defined by a mental condition, "psychical hermaphroditism." Its symptoms were "inclinations to both sexes." These heterodox sexuals also betrayed inclinations "to abnormal methods of gratification," that is, techniques to insure pleasure without procreation. Dr. Kiernan's heterogeneous sexuals did demonstrate "traces of the normal sexual appetite" (a touch of procreative desire). Kiernan's normal sexuals were implicitly defined by a monolithic other-sex inclination and procreative aim. Significantly, they still lacked a name.

Dr. Kiernan's article of 1892 also included one of the earliest-known uses of the word "homosexual" in American English. Kiernan defined "Pure homosexuals" as persons whose "general mental state is that of the opposite sex." Kiernan thus defined homosexuals by their deviance from a gender norm. His heterosexuals displayed a double deviance from both gender and procreative norms.

Though Kiernan used the new words "heterosexual" and "homosexual," an old procreative standard and a new gender norm coexisted uneasily in his thought. His word heterosexual defined a mixed person and compound urge, abnormal because they wantonly included procreative and non-procreative objectives, as well as same-sex and different-sex attractions.

That same year, 1892, Dr. Krafft-Ebing's influential Psychopathia Sexualis was first translated and published in the United States. ³ But Kiernan and Krafft-Ebing by no means agreed on the definition of the heterosexual. In Krafft-Ebing's book, "hetero-sexual" was used unambiguously in the modern sense to refer to an erotic feeling for a different sex. "Homo-sexual" referred unambiguously to an erotic feeling for a "same sex." In Krafft-Ebing's
volume, unlike Kiernan's article, heterosexual and homosexual were clearly distinguished from a third category, a "psycho-sexual hermaphroditism," defined by impulses toward both sexes.

Krafft-Ebing hypothesized an inborn "sexual instinct" for relations with the "opposite sex," the inherent "purpose" of which was to foster procreation. Krafft-Ebing's erotic drive was still a reproductive instinct. But the doctor's clear focus on a different-sex versus same-sex sexuality constituted a historic, epochal move from an absolute procreative standard of normality toward a new norm. His definition of heterosexuality as other-sex attraction provided the basis for a revolutionary, modern break with a centuries-old procreative standard.

It is difficult to overstress the importance of that new way of categorizing. The German's mode of labeling was radical in referring to the biological sex, masculinity or femininity, and the pleasure of actors (along with the procreative purpose of acts). Krafft-Ebing's heterosexual offered the modern world a new norm that came to dominate our idea of the sexual universe, helping to change it from a mode of human reproduction and engendering to a mode of pleasure. The heterosexual category provided the basis for a move from a production-oriented, procreative imperative to a consumerist pleasure principle—an institutionalized pursuit of happiness. . . .

Only gradually did doctors agree that heterosexual referred to a normal, "other-sex" eros. This new standard-model heterosex provided the pivotal term for the modern regularization of eros that paralleled similar attempts to standardize masculinity and femininity, intelligence, and manufacturing. The idea of heterosexuality as the master sex from which all others deviated was (like the idea of the master race) deeply authoritarian. The doctors' normalization of a sex that was hetero proclaimed a new heterosexual separation—an erotic apartheid that forcefully segregated the sex normals from the sex perverts. The new, strict boundaries made the emerging erotic world less polymorphous—safer for sex normals. However, the idea of such creatures as heterosexuals and homosexuals emerged from the narrow world of medicine to become a commonly accepted notion only in the early twentieth century. In 1901, in the comprehensive Oxford English Dictionary, "heterosexual" and "homosexual" had not yet made it.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE HETEROSEXUAL MYSTIQUE: 1900–1930

In the early years of this heterosexual century the tentative hetero hypothesis was stabilized, fixed, and widely distributed as the ruling sexual orthodoxy: The Heterosexual Mystique. Starting among pleasure-affirming urban working-class youths, southern blacks, and Greenwich-Village bohemians as defensive subculture, heterosex soon triumphed as dominant culture. In its earliest version, the twentieth-century heterosexual imperative usually continued to associate heterosexuality with a supposed human "need," "drive," or "instinct" for propagation, a procreative urge linked inextricably with carnal lust as it had not been earlier. In the early twentieth century, the falling birth rate, rising divorce rate, and "war of the sexes" of the middle class were matters of increasing public concern. Giving vent to heteroerotic emotions was thus praised as enhancing baby-making capacity, marital intimacy, and family stability. (Only many years later, in the mid-1960s, would heteroeroticism be distinguished completely, in practice and theory, from procreativity and male-female pleasure sex justified in its own name.)

The first part of the new sex norm—hetero—referred to a basic gender divergence. The "opposeness" of the sexes was alleged to be the basis for a
universal, normal, erotic attraction between males and females. The stress on the sexes’ “oppositeness,” which harked back to the early nineteenth century, by no means simply registered biological differences of females and males. The early twentieth-century focus on physiological and gender dimorphism reflected the deep anxieties of men about the shifting work, social roles, and power of men over women, and about the ideals of womanhood and manhood. That gender anxiety is documented, for example, in 1897, in The New York Times' publication of the Reverend Charles Parkhurst's diatribe against female "androtopics," the preacher's derogatory, scientific-sounding name for women who tried to “minimize distinctions by which manhood and womanhood are differentiated." The stress on gender difference was a conservative response to the changing social-sexual division of activity and feeling which gave rise to the independent "New Woman" of the 1880s and eroticized "Flapper" of the 1920s.

The second part of the new hetero norm referred positively to sexuality. That novel upbeat focus on the hedonistic possibilities of male-female conjunctions also reflected a social transformation—a revaluing of pleasure and recreation, consumption and work in commercial, capitalist society. The democratic attribution of a normal lust to human females (as well as males) served to authorize women's enjoyment of their own bodies and began to undermine the early Victorian idea of the pure True Woman—a sex-affirmative action still part of women's struggle. The twentieth-century Erotic Woman also undercut nineteenth-century feminist assertion of women’s moral superiority, cast suspicions of lust on women's passionate romantic friendships with women, and asserted the presence of a menacing female monster, "the lesbian." In the perspective of heterosexual history, this early twentieth century struggle for the more explicit depiction of an “opposite-sex” eros appears in a curious new light. Ironically, we find sex-conservatives, the social purity advocates of censorship and repression, fighting against the depiction not just of sexual perversity but also of the new normal heterosexuality. That a more open depiction of normal sex had to be defended against forces of propriety confirms the claim that heterosexuality’s predecessor, Victorian True Love, had included no legitimate eros.

THE HETEROSEXUAL STEPS OUT: 1930–1945

In 1930, in The New York Times, heterosexuality first became a love that dared to speak its name. On April 30th of that year, the word “heterosexual” is first known to have appeared in The New York Times Book Review. There, a critic described the subject of André Gide's The Immoralist proceeding "from a heterosexual liaison to a homosexual one." The ability to slip between sexual categories was referred to casually as a rather unremarkable aspect of human possibility. This is also the first known reference by The Times to the new hetero/homo duo.

The following month the second reference to the hetero/homo dyad appeared in The New York Times Book Review, in a comment on Floyd Dell's Love in the Machine Age. This work revealed a prominent antipuritan of the 1930s using the dire threat of homosexuality as his rationale for greater heterosexual freedom. The Times quoted Dell's warning that current abnormal social conditions kept the young dependent on their parents, causing "infantilism, prostitution and homosexuality." Also quoted was Dell's attack on the "inculcation of purity" that "breeds distrust of the opposite sex." Young people, Dell said, should be "permitted to develop normally to heterosexual adulthood." "But," The Times reviewer emphasized, "such a state already exists,
here and now.” And so it did. Heterosexuality, a new gender-sex category, had been distributed from the narrow, rarified realm of a few doctors to become a nationally, even internationally, cited aspect of middle-class life.\textsuperscript{10} …

HETEROSEXUAL HEGEMONY: 1945–1965

The “cult of domesticity” following World War II—the reassociation of women with the home, motherhood, and child-care; men with fatherhood and wage work outside the home—was a period in which the predominance of the hetero norm went almost unchallenged, an era of heterosexual hegemony. This was an age in which conservative mental-health professionals reasserted the old link between heterosexuality and procreation. In contrast, sex-liberals of the day strove, ultimately with success, to expand the heterosexual ideal to include within the boundaries of normality a wider-than-ever range of nonprocreative, premarital, and extra-marital behaviors. But sex-liberal reform actually helped to extend and secure the dominance of the heterosexual idea, as we shall see when we get to Kinsey.

The post-war sex-conservative tendency was illustrated in 1947, in Ferdinand Lundberg and Dr. Marnia Farnham’s book, \textit{Modern Woman: The Lost Sex}. Improper masculinity and femininity was exemplified, the authors decreed, by “engagement in heterosexual relations… with the complete intent to see to it that they do not eventuate in reproduction.”\textsuperscript{11} Their procreatively-defined heterosex was one expression of a postwar ideology of fecundity that, internalized and enacted dutifully by a large part of the population, gave rise to the postwar baby boom.

The idea of the feminine female and masculine male as prolific breeders was also reflected in the stress, specific to the late 1940s, on the homosexual as sad symbol of “sterility”—that particular loaded term appears incessantly in comments on homosexuality dating to the fecund forties.

In 1948, in \textit{The New York Times Book Review}, sex liberalism was in ascendancy. Dr. Howard A. Rusk declared that Alfred Kinsey’s just published report on \textit{Sexual Behavior in the Human Male} had found “wide variations in sex concepts and behavior.” This raised the question: “What is ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’?” In particular, the report had found that “homosexual experience is much more common than previously thought,” and “there is often a mixture of both homo and hetero experience.”\textsuperscript{12}

Kinsey’s counting of orgasms indeed stressed the wide range of behaviors and feelings that fell within the boundaries of a quantitative, statistically accounted heterosexuality. Kinsey’s liberal reform of the hetero/homo dualism widened the narrow, old hetero category to accord better with the varieties of social experience. He thereby contradicted the older idea of a monolithic, qualitatively defined, natural procreative act, experience, and person.\textsuperscript{13}

Though Kinsey explicitly questioned “whether the terms ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ belong in a scientific vocabulary,” his counting of climax was generally understood to define normal sex as majority sex. This quantified norm constituted a final, society-wide break with the old qualitatively defined reproductive standard. Though conceived of as purely scientific, the statistical definition of the normal as the-sex-most-people-are-having substituted a new, quantitative moral standard for the old, qualitative sex ethic—another triumph for the spirit of capitalism.

Kinsey also explicitly contested the idea of an absolute, either/or antithesis between hetero and homo persons. He denied that human beings “represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual.” The world, he ordered, “is not to be divided into sheep and goats.” The hetero/homo
division was not nature’s doing: “Only the human mind invents categories and tries to force facts into separated pigeon-holes. The living world is a continuum.”

With a wave of the taxonomist’s hand, Kinsey dismissed the social and historical division of people into heteros and homos. His denial of heterosexual and homosexual personhood rejected the social reality and profound subjective force of a historically constructed tradition which, since 1892 in the United States, had cut the sexual population in two and helped to establish the social reality of a heterosexual and homosexual identity.

On the one hand, the social construction of homosexual persons has led to the development of a powerful gay liberation identity politics based on an ethnic group model. This has freed generations of women and men from a deep, painful, socially induced sense of shame, and helped to bring about a society-wide liberalization of attitudes and responses to homosexuals. On the other hand, contesting the notion of homosexual and heterosexual persons was one early, partial resistance to the limits of the hetero/homo construction. Gore Vidal, rebel son of Kinsey, has for years been joyfully proclaiming:

there is no such thing as a homosexual or a heterosexual person. There are only homo- or heterosexual acts. Most people are a mixture of impulses if not practices, and what anyone does with a willing partner is of no social or cosmic significance.

So why all the fuss? In order for a ruling class to rule, there must be arbitrary prohibitions. Of all prohibitions, sexual taboo is the most useful because sex involves everyone. . . . we have allowed our governors to divide the population into two teams. One team is good, godly, straight; the other is evil, sick, vicious.

HETEROSEXUALITY QUESTIONED: 1965–1982

By the late 1960s, anti-establishment counterculturalists, fledgling feminists, and homosexual-rights activists had begun to produce an unprecedented critique of sexual repression in general, of women’s sexual repression in particular, of marriage and the family—and of some forms of heterosexuality. This critique even found its way into The New York Times.

In March 1968, in the theater section of that paper, freelancer Rosalyn Regelson cited a scene from a satirical review brought to New York by a San Francisco troupe:

a heterosexual man wanders inadvertently into a homosexual bar. Before he realizes his mistake, he becomes involved with an aggressive queen who orders a drink for him. Being a broadminded liberal and trying to play it cool until he can back out of the situation gracefully, he asks, “How do you like being a ah homosexual?” To which the queen draws drily, “How do you like being ah whatever it is you are?”

Regelson continued:

The Two Cultures in confrontation. The middle-class liberal, challenged today on many fronts, finds his last remaining fixed value, his heterosexuality, called into question. The theater . . . recalls the strategies he uses in dealing with this ultimate threat to his world view.
HETEROSEXUAL HISTORY: OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Our brief survey of the heterosexual idea suggests a new hypothesis. Rather than naming a conjunction old as Eve and Adam, heterosexual designates a word and concept, a norm and role, an individual and group identity, a behavior and feeling, and a peculiar sexual-political institution particular to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Because much stress has been placed here on heterosexuality as word and concept, it seems important to affirm that heterosexuality (and homosexuality) came into existence before it was named and thought about. The formulation of the heterosexual idea did not create a heterosexual experience or behavior; to suggest otherwise would be to ascribe determining power to labels and concepts. But the titling and envisioning of heterosexuality did play an important role in consolidating the construction of the heterosexual’s social existence. Before the wide use of the word heterosexual, I suggest, women and men did not mutually lust with the same profound, sure sense of normalcy that followed the distribution of “heterosexual” as universal sanctifier.

According to this proposal, women and men make their own sexual histories. But they do not produce their sex lives just as they please. They make their sexualities within a particular mode of organization given by the past and altered by their changing desire, their present power and activity, and their vision of a better world. That hypothesis suggests a number of good reasons for the immediate inauguration of research on a historically specific heterosexuality.

The study of the history of the heterosexual experience will forward a great intellectual struggle still in its early stages. This is the fight to pull heterosexuality, homosexuality, and all the sexualities out of the realm of nature and biology [and] into the realm of the social and historical. Feminists have explained to us that anatomy does not determine our gender destinies (our masculinities and femininities). But we’ve only recently begun to consider that biology does not settle our erotic fates. The common notion that biology determines the object of sexual desire, or that physiology and society together cause sexual orientation, are determinisms that deny the break existing between our bodies and situations and our desiring. Just as the biology of our hearing organs will never tell us why we take pleasure in Bach or delight in Dixieland, our female or male anatomies, hormones, and genes will never tell us why we yearn for women, men, both, other, or none. That is because desiring is a self-generated project of individuals within particular historical cultures. Heterosexual history can help us see the place of values and judgments in the construction of our own and others’ pleasures, and to see how our erotic tastes—our aesthetics of the flesh—are socially institutionalized through the struggle of individuals and classes.

The study of heterosexuality in time will also help us to recognize the vast historical diversity of sexual emotions and behaviors—a variety that challenges the monolithic heterosexual hypothesis. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman’s Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America refers in passing to numerous substantial changes in sexual activity and feeling: for example, the widespread use of contraceptives in the nineteenth century, the twentieth-century incitement of the female orgasm, and the recent sexual conduct changes by gay men in response to the AIDS epidemic. It’s now a commonplace of family history that people in particular classes feel and behave in substantially different ways under different historical conditions. Only when we stop assuming an invariable essence of heterosexuality will we begin the research to reveal the full variety of sexual emotions and behaviors.
The historical study of the heterosexual experience can help us understand the erotic relationships of women and men in terms of their changing modes of social organization. Such modal analysis actually characterizes a sex history well underway. This suggests that the eros-gender-procreation system (the social ordering of lust, femininity and masculinity, and baby-making) has been linked closely to a society's particular organization of power and production. To understand the subtle history of heterosexuality we need to look carefully at correlations between (1) society's organization of eros and pleasure; (2) its mode of engendering persons as feminine or masculine (its making of women and men); (3) its ordering of human reproduction; and (4) its dominant political economy. This General Theory of Sexual Relativity proposes that substantial historical changes in the social organization of eros, gender, and procreation have basically altered the activity and experience of human beings within those modes.

A historical view locates heterosexuality and homosexuality in time, helping us distance ourselves from them. This distancing can help us formulate new questions that clarify our long-range sexual-political goals: What has been and is the social function of sexual categorizing? Whose interests have been served by the division of the world into heterosexual and homosexual? Do we dare not draw a line between those two erotic species? Is some sexual naming socially necessary? Would human freedom be enhanced if the sex-biology of our partners in lust was of no particular concern, and had no name? In what kind of society could we all more freely explore our desire and our flesh?

As we move toward [the year 2000], a new sense of the historical making of the heterosexual and homosexual suggests that these are ways of feeling, acting, and being with each other that we can together unmake and radically remake according to our present desire, power, and our vision of a future political-economy of pleasure.

NOTES

1. Some historians have recently told us to revise our idea of sexless Victorians: their experience and even their ideology, it is said, were more erotic than we previously thought. Despite the revisionists, I argue that "purity" was indeed the dominant, early Victorian, white, middle-class standard. For the debate on Victorian sexuality see John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. xii.

2. This reference to females reminds us that the invention of heterosexuality had vastly different impacts on the histories of women and men. It also differed in its impact on lesbians and heterosexual women, homosexual and heterosexual men, the middle class and working class, and on different religious, racial, national, and geographic groups.

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The Accidental Asian

Eric Liu

The Asian American identity was born, as I was, roughly thirty years ago. In those three decades it has struggled to find relevance and a coherent voice. As I have. It has tried to adapt itself to the prevailing attitudes about race—namely, that one matters in this society, if one is colored, mainly to the extent that one claims a race for oneself. I, too, have tried to accommodate these forces. The Asian American identity, like me, renounces whiteness. It draws strength from the possibility of transcending the fear and blindness of the past. So do I. It is the so very American product of a rejection of history’s limitations, rooted in little more than its own creation a generation ago. As I am.

What I am saying is that I can identify with the Asian American identity. I understand why it does what it does. It is as if this identity and I were twin siblings, separated at birth but endowed with uncanny foreknowledge of each other’s motives. The problem is, I disagree with it often. I become frustrated by it, even disappointed. The feeling is mutual, I suspect. We react to the same world in very different ways.

And yes, I do think of this identity as something that reacts, something almost alive, in the way that a shadow, or a mirror image—or a conscience—is almost alive. It has, if not a will of its own, then at least a highly developed habit of asserting its existence. It is like a storm, a beautiful, swirling weather pattern that moves back and forth across my mind. It draws me in, it repulses me. I am ever aware of its presence. There is always part of me that believes I will find deliverance if I merge with this identity. Yet still I hold it at a remove. For I fear that in the middle of this swirl, this great human churning emptiness.

What must it be like to be told you are Asian American? Imagine that you are an immigrant, young, but old enough to get by, and you have been in America for only a few months. Imagine that you come from Korea. Imagine that you speak Korean, read Korean newspapers, eat Korean food. Imagine that you live in East Flushing or in South Central and you see only the Korean faces. There are other faces, yes, brown and black and yellow and white, but the ones you see, the ones you can read, are Korean. Imagine that time passes, and you realize now that you see the other faces. Imagine that the order of life in this city, the invisible grid, has become visible to you. More than that, it has affected you. What was Korean before is not exactly Korean anymore: your speech is interspersed now with fragments of English, Spanish; your daily paper you must find at a crowded, strange-smelling newspaper stand, tucked among bundles of other scripts and shades of print; your strong, salty food, supplemented now by frosted cereal and cookies, you eat while quietly absorbed by a television program you cannot understand except in mime. Imagine that you are becoming a Korean American. Is that not shock enough? To know that what was once the noun is becoming the adjective? And so perhaps you retreat, you compensate, you remind yourself every night before you pray that you are Korean so that you and your Maker will not forget. But imagine that the forgetting is relentless. That more time passes, and a knock on the door of your apartment brings you face-to-face with a Japanese, and something deep inside you, a passing sneer or a cautionary tale, a history, twinges. And imagine that this Japanese begins speaking to you in English, the kind of English the television produces, and you understand perfectly what she is saying. Imagine that what she is saying is that she needs your help. That you are invited to a rally (or is it a party?). That we—you and this Japanese and so many unseen others—must stand together against a common foe. Imagine that what she is saying is that you are Asian American. What must it be like? What do you think about when you close the door and walk to the window and realize,
while peering out over a scene of so many unknowable lives but four knowable colors, how faint the aroma of your own kitchen has become, how strong the scent of the street?

I find myself in a cavernous television studio, seated beside the anchorwoman. The cameras are on us, lights are burning overhead. I am nervous, although I shouldn't be: this is my job. I do commentary for a cable news network and I come to this studio often. This day, I have been called in as a "special guest" to discuss a recent and controversial cover of the *National Review* magazine depicting the president, vice president, and first lady in yellowface—that is, in stereotypical Oriental caricature. "The Manchurian Candidate," reads the cover text, referring, of course, to Bill Clinton and his role in the "Asian money" scandal that has been brewing since the 1996 election.

The news package leading up to my entrance describes the brouhaha that has arisen over the cover, and as the tape comes to a close a red light comes on, signaling that we are on the air. The anchor turns to me, her brow knit at the appropriate angle of concern: "What about this cover do you find offensive, Eric?"

Truth be told, I was not deeply offended when I first saw the cover. (My mother, in fact, was much angrier. I mainly thought it was juvenile, sophomoric. And I didn't think about it again until a few days later, when my producer waved it at me and asked for a reaction. I knew what answer he was looking for; what answer any self-respecting Asian would give.

"Well," I say, turning now to the camera, "these caricatures play off a long history of demeaning anti-Asian stereotypes—the buck-teeth, the slanted eyes, the bamboo hat. They are racist in their effect." And on I go. I play, in other words, the Asian spokesman, ever vigilant against affronts to my race. The anchor nods understandingly as I speak.

Soon a staff writer from the *Review* joins the discussion via satellite. He, too, is Asian American, South Asian. "We didn't think this cover would be particularly controversial," I hear this other Asian say. "Normal people aren't offended by it."

Normal people? The more this other Asian talks, the more heated I become in my responses. At first I assume it's the adrenaline rush of verbal combat. But as he goes on mouthing his disingenuous party line—something like, "We would've used leprechauns if this scandal was about Irish money"—I become more than just irked, more than angry, until suddenly I realize that I am outraged. I am sending a searing look into my own reflection in the camera as I argue. And I am shouting now: I have raised my voice to defend my people.

"Somehow, we have gotten to the point where those who protest bias and insensitivity are demonized more than those who commit it!" I boom.

"I'm not demonizing you," the other Asian offers.

The segment ends shortly afterward, the red light goes off. An Asian American employee comes over to shake my hand. I feel pleased with myself, pumped up. But even before I've removed my mike, I realize something unusual has happened. When the debate began I was playing a part, because I felt I should. Eight minutes later I had merged completely with my role. Almost by chance, it seemed, I'd become a righteous, vocal Asian American. All it had taken was a stage and a villain.

That's how it is with Asian American identity—nothing brings it out like other people's expectations and a sense of danger. Until recently, I rarely self-identified as "Asian American." I might say "Chinese American," if asked. Otherwise, pointedly, "American." But there are times when what you choose to call yourself becomes irrelevant. Ask Tiger Woods, whose insistence that he was "Cabinasian" didn't keep the media from blackening him, when he first arrived, into golf's Jackie Robinson. There are times when other people need to think of you as X even if you believe you are Y. This was one of those times. I was in the studio to speak as an Asian American.

Of course, I was complicit in this casting; I chose to take the role. What was curious to me, however, is how I managed, if even for a moment, to lose myself in it. Here is where the sense of danger came into play. I may not have started out being terribly exercised about the perils of Yellow Peril stereotyping. But once I perceived the smarmy hypocrisy of this fellow—once I heard his intransigent insistence that the fault lay only with whiny, race-peddling Asians like me—I was chilled by the sense that maybe there is a danger out there. Maybe it is true, as I was then asserting on camera, that what separates insulting caricatures from more troubling
forms of anti-Asian sentiment is only a slippery slope. At that moment I began to comprehend the most basic rationale for pan-Asian solidarity: self-defense.

I still understand that rationale, and many others. I understand, that is, why so many Americans of various ethnic origins have chosen, over the last generation, to adopt a one-size-fits-all “Asian American” identity. It is an affirming counterstatement to the narrative in which yellow people are either foreigners or footnotes. It is a bulwark against bigotry. It is, perhaps most important, a community. I can recount the ways, over the years, that I’ve become more Asian American myself. I’ve learned the appropriate cultural and political references. I’ve become familiar with the history. And of course, I’ve spoken out against Asian-bashing on national television.

Nevertheless, the fact remains: I am not an Asian American activist; I just play one on TV. Even though I have a grasp of why this identity matters, I cannot escape the feeling that it is contrived and, in a more profound way, unnecessary. In a way, I envy those who choose to become wholeheartedly Asian American: those who believe. At least they have a certain order to their existence. I, on the other hand, am an accidental Asian. Someone who has stumbled on to a sense of race; who wonders now what to do with it.

We are inventors, all. We assemble our selves from fragments of story.

Every identity is a social construction, a drawing of arbitrary lines. But are all identities equally arbitrary—and equally necessary? It’s worthwhile to compare a racial identity like “Asian American” with what might be said to exist “within” it (ethnicity) and “around” it (nation).

An ethnic identity like “Chinese” matters because it is a medium of cultural continuity and meaning. “Chineseness,” to be sure, is not an easy thing to delineate. It is a simplified marker for a complex reality. But the fact is that when I speak of my heritage—or when I speak of losing my heritage—I am referring to sounds and stories and customs that are Chinese American.

National identity, in the American case, is more problematic. It is far-flung and often contradictory. It is more reliant on myth and paradox than many other national identities. It is not, however, empty of meaning. America matters in both a civic sense and a cultural one. As a state, it is a guarantor of unmatched freedoms. As a place, it is an unrivaled incubator of ambition. The syntheses that America generates are, for better and worse, what pushes humanity forward today.

Race matters, too, of course. The difference is, race matters mainly because race matters. It’s undeniable, in other words, that society is still ordered by the random bundle of traits we call “race”—and that benefits and penalties are often assigned accordingly. But it is this persistent social fact, more than any intrinsic worth, that makes racial identity deserving of our moral attention.

Don’t get me wrong: it’s not that I wish for a society without race. At bottom, I consider myself an identity libertarian. I wish for a society that treats race as an option, the way white people today are able to enjoy ethnicity as an option. As something cost-free, neutral, fluid. And yet I know that the tendency of race is usually to solidify: into clubs, into shields.

To a great degree, then, my misgivings about racial identity flow from a fear of ethnosclerosis: the hardening of the walls between the races. But perhaps my worries, like the pageants of difference that prompted them, belong to a time that is already passing. Perhaps over the horizon, beyond multiculturalism, awaits the cosmopolitan realm that David Hollinger calls “postethnic America.” And perhaps there is no way to call forth this horizon but with the stories we have at hand.

I have a friend from college who used to be a de-racinated East Coast suburban ABC—someone, in other words, quite like me. When he moved to the West Coast for graduate school, though, he got religion. He was, for the first time, in a place where Asian Americans were not few and far between. He joined the Asian student union, began reading Asian American journals and literature anthologies, spent more and more of his days with Asian friends, entered into his first relationship with a girl who wasn’t white (she was Japanese, to the vexation of his parents). Soon he was speaking to me in earnest about the importance of being Asian. And he seemed genuinely happy, at ease.

It’s not hard to see why my friend became what I call a “born-again Asian.” He had found
fellowship and, with the fellowship, meaning. He had found a place where he would always fit in, always be recognized. He had found a way to fill a hole, the gnawing sense of heritage deficit that plagues many a second-generation banana. And the mortar he was using was not anything so ancient and musty as Chinese civilization; it was a new, synthetic, made-in-the-U.S.A. adhesive called “Asianness.” For my friend, this was exciting as well as fulfilling.

My own conversion, if I can call it that, is far from complete. Having spent so much of my life up through college self-pedaling my Asianness, I began afterward to realize how unnecessary that had been. I began, tentatively, to peel back the topmost layers of my anti-race defenses. Did I have an epiphany? No; I think I simply started to grow up. I became old enough to shed the mask of perpetual racelessness; old enough, as well, to sense in myself a yearning for affinity, for affiliation. So I joined a couple of Asian American organizations, began going to their meetings and conventions. And I was welcome. Nobody questioned my authenticity, my standing. Mainly I encountered people quite like me: second-generation, mainstream, in search of something else. Soon I was conversant in the patois of “the community.” Soon I was calling myself, without hesitation, “Asian American.”

Don’t give me too much credit, though. The truth is, I was mainly exploring the public, institutional, side of Asian America. The private side, the realm of close friendships formed through race, I have entered only lately. Perhaps the most you could say of me is that I am an assimilist in recovery: once in denial, now halfway up the twelve-step to full, self-actualized Asian Americanness. I am glad to have climbed this far and to have left behind some insecurities. I am not sure, however, how much farther I should go.

Thirty-some years ago, there were no “Asian Americans.” Not a single one. There were Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, and so on: a disparate lot who shared only yellow-to-brown skin tones and the experience of bigotry that their pigmentation provoked. Though known to their countrymen, collectively, as “Orientals,” and assumed to share common traits and cultures, they didn’t think of themselves at all as a collective. It really wasn’t until the upheavals of the late 1960s that some of them began to.

Stirred by the precedent of Black Power, a cadre of Asian student activists, mostly in California, performed an act of conceptual jujitsu: they would create a positive identity out of the unhappy fact that whites tend to lump all Asians together. Their first move was to throw off the “Oriental” label, which, to their thinking, was the cliché-ridden product of a colonial European gaze. They replaced it with “Yellow,” and after protests from their darker-hued constituents, they replaced “Yellow” with “Asian American.” In their campaign for semantic legitimacy, the ex-Orientals got an unlikely assist from bean-counting federal bureaucrats. Looking to make affirmative action programs easier to document, the Office of Management and Budget in 1973 christened the term Asian and Pacific Islander for use in government forms. In the eyes of the feds, all Asians now looked alike. But this was a good thing.

The greatest problem for “Asian America,” at least initially, was that this place existed mostly in the arid realm of census figures. It was a statistical category more than a social reality. In the last few decades, though, Asian American activists, intellectuals, artists, and students have worked, with increasing success, to transform their label into a lifestyle and to create, by every means available, a truly pan-ethnic identity for their ten million members. They have begun to build a nation.

The scholar Benedict Anderson has aptly defined the nation as an “imagined community,” a grouping that relies for cohesion on an intangible, exclusive sense of connection among its far-flung members. Sometimes a nation has a state to enforce its will, sometimes it does not. But it must always have a mythology, a quasi-official culture that is communicated to all who belong, wherever they may be.

The Asian American narrative is rooted deeply in threat. That is one of the main things polyglot Americans of Asian descent have had in common: the fear of being discriminated against simply on account of being, metaphorically if not genetically, Chinen. It is no accident that an early defining skirmish for Asian American activists was the push for Asian American Studies programs at San Francisco State and Berkeley in 1968. For what these programs did, in part, was to record and transmit the history of mistreatment that so many immigrants from Asia had endured over the centuries. Today, in the same vein, one of the most powerful allegories in Asian American lore is the tale of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American beaten to death in 1982 by two laid-off white auto workers who took him to be Japanese. The Chin story tells of a lingering
strain of vicious, indiscriminate racism that can erupt without warning.

Yet no race can live on threat alone. To sustain a racial identity, there must be more than other people’s racism, more than a negation. There must also be an affirmative sensibility, an aesthetic that emerges through the fusing of arts and letters with politics. Benedict Anderson again, in Imagined Communities, points to vernacular “print-capitalism”—books, newspapers, pamphlets—as the driving force of an incipient national consciousness. On the contemporary scene, perhaps no periodical better epitomizes the emerging aesthetic than the New York–based bimonthly A. Magazine: Inside Asian America.

Founded eight years ago by a Harvard graduate and entrepreneurial dynamo named Jeff Yang, A. Magazine covers fashion, politics, film, books, and trends in a style one might call Multicultural Chic. To flip through the glossy pages of this publication is to be swept into a cosmopolitan, cutting-edge world where Asians matter. It is to enter a realm populated by Asian and Asian American luminaries: actors like Jackie Chan and Margaret Cho, athletes like Michael Chang and Kristi Yamaguchi. It is to see everyday spaces—sporting events, television shows, workplaces, bookstores, boutiques—through the eyes of a well-educated, socially conscious, politically aware, media-savvy, left-of-center, twenty-to-thirty-something, second-generation Asian American. It is to create, and be created by, an Ideal Asian.

There is something fantastic about all this, and I mean that in every way. That the children of Chinese and Japanese immigrants, or Korean and Japanese, or Indian and Pakistani, should so heedlessly disregard the animosities of their ancestors; that they should prove it possible to reinvent themselves as one community; that they should catalog their collective contributions to society so very sincerely: what can you say, really, but “Only in America”? There is an impressive, defiant ambition at work here: an assertion of ownership, a demand for respect. But there is also, on occasion, an under-oxygenated air of fantasy, a shimmering mirage of whiteness and Asian self-sufficiency. A dream:

The dream of a nation-race called Asian America makes the most sense if you believe that the long-discredited “melting pot” was basically replaced by a “quintuple melting pot.” This is the multicultural method at its core: liquefy the differences within racial groups, solidify those among them. It is a method that many self-proclaimed Asian Americans, with the most meager of intentions, have applied to their own lives. They have thrown the chink and the jap and the gook and the flip into the same great bubbling cauldron. Now they await the emergence of a new and superior being, the Asian American. They wish him into existence. And what’s troubling about this, frankly, is precisely what’s inspiring: that it is possible.

The invention of a race testifies not only to the power of the human imagination but also to its limits. There is something awesome about the coalescence of a sprawling conglomerate identity. There is something frustrating as well, the sense that all this creativity and energy could have been harnessed to a greater end. For the challenge today is not only to announce the arrival of color. It is also to form combinations that lie beyond color. The creators of Asian America suggest that racial nationalism is the most meaningful way of claiming American life. I worry that it defers the greater task of confronting American life.

Power. Race, in the guise of whiteness, has always been about power. Now, in the masks of color, it is also about countervailing power. To call yourself a minority today is not only to acknowledge that you are seen by whites as non-white. It can also be to choose, as a matter of vocation, to sustain the dichotomy.

Frank Wu, a law professor and correspondent for Asian Week, once wrote a candid and elegant essay in which he confessed to becoming a Professional Asian American. “Much like someone who becomes famous for being famous,” he wrote, “I am making a career out of my race.” He is not alone, of course, in his career choice. Over the last twenty years, there has been a proliferation of pan-Asian associations, advocacy groups, and political lobbies. These groups offer their members connections, capital, standing, protection. They do important work on behalf of those without a voice. Together, they represent the bureaucratization—the mechanization, really—of the race. The Professional Asian Americans who run these groups have learned well from their black and Hispanic counterparts that if you build it, they will come: if you construct the institutions that a “legitimate” race is supposed to have, then people will treat your race as legitimate.
One thing Professional Asian Americans are quick to point out is that they are not honorary whites. Fair enough: one would like to be able to do well in this country without being called white. And one should be able to address the fact that plenty of Asian Americans, unlike “real” whites, still pay a social penalty for their race. But something Professional Asian Americans sometimes overlook is that they are not honorary blacks either. African Americans created the template for minority politics in this country. That template, set in the heavy type of protest and opposition, is not always the best fit for Asian Americans. For Asian Americans haven’t the moral purchase that blacks have upon our politics.

Asian Americans belong not to a race so much as to a confederation, a big yellow-and-brown tent that covers a panoply of interests. And while those interests converge usefully on some points—antidiscrimination, open immigration—they diverge on many others. This is a “community,” after all, that consists of ten million people of a few dozen ethnicities, who have roots all across America and around the globe, whose families have been here anywhere from less than a week to more than a century, whose political beliefs run the ideological gamut, who are welfare mothers and multimillionaires, soldiers and doctors, believers and pagans. It would take an act of selective deafness to hear, in this cacophony, a unitary voice.

Without a unitary voice, however, there can never be maximum leverage in the bargaining for benefits. There can be no singular purpose for the Professional Asian American, no stable niche in the marketplace of identities. It will grow ever harder to speak of “the race.” So be it. What will remain is the incalculable diversity of a great and growing mass of humanity. And there, in the multitudes, will lie a very different kind of power.

What maketh a race?
To people in China, the Chinese constitute a single race. Except, that is, for those Chinese who aren’t Chinese; those who aren’t of the dominant Han group, like the Miao or Yao or Zhuang or whatever. They belong to separate races.
To the Chinese, Indians are a single, and separate, race. But “Indian” to many Indians, is like “Asian American” to me: an artificial, mono-


When I read the calendar the first time, I took all the information at face value, noted a few events that sounded interesting. When I read it a second time, a question pressed its way through the hazy membrane of multiculturalism in my brain and presented itself starkly, even rudely: What the heck is an “APA”?

If “Asian Pacific American” is an overbroad generalization, then what is “APA” but a soulless
distillation of an overbroad generalization? I know it’s a typographical and linguistic convenience, like the “USA” in USA Today. But the truncation and abbreviation of experience that the label perpetrates reflects the truncation and abbreviation of reasoning that you’ll find in the call for celebration.

I agree that in the form of a coalition—that is, as a set of political alliances among organized groups—the Asian American identity can be quite important. But it is not a coalition that I am being asked to celebrate. It is a race: a discrete entity with “one vision, one mission, one voice.” A race, which is supposed to be more primordial than any temporary, tactical alliance. A race, which apparently does not need justification for its existence but merely is. One celebrates the race as a matter of tradition, because it is there. Moreover, to celebrate the race is to nourish it, to sustain it. And that is precisely what gives me pause.

In a provocative book called The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture, Daniel Harris describes the way that the longtime isolation of the gay community inspired an intensely creative and pointedly oppositional gay culture. Now that intolerance and ostracism are declining, Harris says, elements of that subculture are being coopted by the mainstream: assimilated. He laments this fact, because in his view, a real cultural legacy is disappearing. But he does not lament it so much that he wishes for a return to the kind of homophobia that had yielded the subculture in the first place. Gay culture is no longer so necessary, Harris reluctantly acknowledges, and this is a triumph as much as it is a tragedy.

The case of gay culture is relevant because it raises the big questions of identity politics: After discrimination subsides, is it still necessary for a minority group to keep the cultural wagons circled? Should walls that once existed to keep a minority group out now be maintained to keep them in? Should a prison of identity be converted, upon liberation, into a home? It seems that many who cheer Asian Pacific American Heritage Month are saying “yes” to these questions.

I don’t mean to suggest that Asian Americans are able to live bigotry-free lives today, or that most Asian American activists are cultural segregationists, or that the gay community provides a perfect parallel to the Asian community. What I am saying, simply, is that more than ever before, Asian Americans are only as isolated as they want to be. They—we—do not face the levels of discrimination and hatred that demand an enclave mentality, particularly among the second generation, which, after all, provides most of the leadership for the nation-race. The choice to invent and sustain a pan-Asian identity is just that: a choice, not an imperative.

When you think about it, though, this choice seems almost like a reflex, a compensatory reaction to a derogatory action. What troubles me about becoming Asian American is not that it entails associating with a certain kind of person who, in some respects, is like me. What troubles me is associating with a certain kind of person whose similarity to me is defined on the primary basis of pigmentation, hair color, eye shape, and so forth. On the basis, that is, of the very badge that was once the source of stigma. This progression is natural, perhaps even necessary. But it lends a fragile quality to calls for “Asian American pride.” For what is such pride, in this light, but shame turned upside down?

There are, of course, many ways to be Asian American: single-mindedly, offhandedly, out of conviction, out of convention. Racial identity needn’t be an all-or-none proposition. But the more I have had occasion to let out my “inner Asian,” the more I have felt a tinge of insincerity. For it is as if I were applying a salve to a wound I am not even sure I have, nursing a memory of exclusion and second-class treatment that people who look like me are presumed to suffer. Is this memory of wounds, this wounded memory, really mine? Is there anything more to my “APA-ness”?

What’s missing from Asian American culture is culture.

The idea seems absurd at first. No Asian American culture? What about Zen Buddhism, feng shui, karaoke bars? Well, yes. The problem, though, is that these and other forms of culture inherited by Asian Americans are ethnic in origin. The folkways are Chinese, for example, not “Asian.” The holidays are Vietnamese, the language Korean, the dress Japanese. As far as an organically pan-Asian culture is concerned, there isn’t much there. As one Asian American activist once said tellingly, “I think Asian American culture is anything that Asian Americans are doing. Just that.”

Does the same logic apply to “Asian American history”? There is something undeniably powerful about a work like Strangers from a Diff-
farent Shore, Ronald Takaki’s synoptic history of Asian Americans. Chinese laborers built the railroads and challenged discriminatory laws, Japanese Americans fought for principle and for country in World War II. More people should know about these and other legacies. But herding such facts under the heading of “Asian American history” feels faintly like anachronism. In a subtle way, it ascribes to distinct ethnic communities of the past the pan-ethnic mind-set of the present. It serves to create collective memory retroactively.

Collective memory, like individual memory, can of course be constructed after the fact. But it has greater force in the world when it derives from a past of collective action and shared experience. And that is something that Asian Americans—as Asian Americans—have had for only two or three decades. That’s why, compared with the black or Jewish or even Latino identity, the Asian American identity seems so awfully incoherent. Unlike blacks, Asians do not have a cultural idiom that arose from centuries of thinking of themselves as a race; unlike Jews, Asians haven’t a unifying spiritual and historical legacy; unlike Latinos, another recently invented community, Asians don’t have a linguistic basis for their continued apartness. While the Asian American identity shares with these other identities the bones of collective victimization, it does not have their flesh of cultural content.

It is more meaningful, I think, to celebrate Korean or Vietnamese or Chinese heritage—something with an identifiable cultural core. Something deeper than a mere label. Ultimately, though, my objection is not only to the APA label; it is to the labeling mind itself. The hunger for ethnic heritage is a hunger for classification, for the nostalgic certainty of place. “Heritage” offers us a usable past, coded easily by color. It does not tell us enough about how we—we of every color—should fashion a workable future.

Let me admit: When I read accounts of growing up Nisei in the middle of the century, when I read short stories by Indian immigrants about the struggle of life here, or when I read poems by the children of those immigrants, poems of loss and discovery, I feel connected to something. I find it easy to see in these characters and to hear in their diction the faces and voices of my own family. The scents, textures, and rhythms of my childhood come speeding into vibrant immediacy. This, the knowledge of cross-cultural connection, the possibility of pan-Asian empathy, is something to be valued.

But why, in the end, should empathy be skin-deep? Experiences like migration, generational conflict, language barriers, and ostracism are not the sole province of Asians or any other “race.” I admire many Asian American writers who deal in such themes. I cannot get enough of Chang-Rae Lee’s work. I quite enjoy Gish Jen. I find David Mura and Shawn Wong powerful. But at the same time, some of the most resonant scenes of youthful acculturation I ever read were to be found in Philip Roth’s Portnoy’s Complaint. Or Colored People, by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Or Richard Rodriguez’s Hunger of Memory. Or Norman Podhoretz’s Making It.

I define my identity, then, in the simplest way possible: according to those with whom I identify. And I identify with whoever moves me.

No identity is stable in today’s wild, recombinant mix of culture, blood, and ideas. Things fall apart; they make themselves anew. Every race carries within it the seeds of its own destruction.

Today, close to 50 percent of Asian Americans under thirty-five are marrying non-Asians, which promises rather quickly to change the meaning of the race. At the same time, growing numbers are reconstituting themselves into subcommunities of ethnicity, spurred by the Indian, Filipino, Korean, and other “Asian” Americans who have at times felt like extras in this Chinese- and Japanese-dominated show. Meanwhile, mass immigration has made for an Asian American population that is now two-thirds foreign-born, and among many recent arrivals, a pan-Asian identity seems uncomfortable and unnecessary. Finally, the accelerating whirl of global capitalism now means that the most noteworthy kind of Asian American culture may be Asian/American culture: fads and fashions that arrive directly from Asia; things you don’t have to be Asian American to enjoy or to claim.

To put it simply: the Asian American identity as we now know it may not last another generation. Which makes doubters like me grow more doubtful—and more hopeful. There was something about the creation of this race, after all, that embodied the spirit of the times: compensatory, reactive, consumed with what Charles Taylor calls “the politics of recognition.” There is something now about the mutation of the race that reflects a change in that spirit. If whiteness was once the thesis of American life, and colored cults of origin the antithesis, what remains to be
written is the synthesis. From the perspective of my children and their children, from the perspective, that is, of those who will be the synthesis, it may seem that “Asian American” was but a cocoon: something useful, something to outgrow. And in this way, the future of the race may reflect the future of race itself. A future beyond recognition.

I am speaking now to a group of students, mostly freshmen and sophomores, at a small midwestern college. It is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and the students are members of the Asian Student Association. I have come to implore them to get more involved in politics, in public life.

College is supposed to be where Americans of Asian descent become Asian Americans, where the consciousness is awakened. But not this college. The students, improbably, are looking to me for guidance. Though they haven’t said it in so many words, they want to know why it is they gather. They want to know what it is, besides the fact that there are so few of them on this white prairie campus, that should bring and hold them together; what, besides great potluck dinners, there is for them to do.

I am tempted for a moment to preach the gospel of The Individual, of the “unencumbered self” who has transcended such trivialities as race. I consider telling them that the Asian American identity is a leaky raft and that they had better learn to swim. But I don’t have the heart to say any of this. For I, too, am of two minds. Instead, I tell them they should search for meaning as Asian Americans, if they so choose, or as whatever variety of self they feel free to express. So long as they feel free.

Afterward, I join a few students for dinner at a local Japanese restaurant. It is a nice place, spare and serene. We order, and then the oldest among them thanks me formally for coming to their school. For a few minutes, their attention is focused on me; they ask questions about my work, my opinions. Pretty soon, though, they’re just talking to one another, in two or three different conversations, laughing, telling tales, flirting. That’s all right with me. I am a stranger to them, after all, an outsider who doesn’t know their stories. I am here by accident. And so I sit back, quietly, as they share their meal.
Emmett English, a cheerful, easygoing boy, started third grade last year at a new school, Chevy Chase Elementary in Bethesda, Maryland. On his first day he proudly wore a new red Gap sweatshirt and almost immediately wished he had chosen something else.

"A girl called me ‘gay,’" he remembered. "I didn’t know what that meant but I knew it was something bad." His mother, Christina Files, confirmed this. "He came home quite upset," she said.

"That’s sooo gay." "Faggot." "Or ‘lesbo.’ For all the outcry over harassment of gays following the murder of college student Matthew Shepard two years ago, anti-gay insults are still the slang of choice among children and teenagers, according to teachers, counselors and youths themselves. Some say the insults are increasing in school classrooms and hallways—among children as young as 8 or 9—partly because gay youths and their supporters have become more visible and more active.

"Schools are seen as a safe place to say things and get away with it," said Jerry Newberry, director of health information for the National Education Association, a teachers’ union. A recent survey of students in seven states backs up his impression. Human Rights Watch, an international research and advocacy group, reported last month that 2 million U.S. teenagers were having serious problems in school because they were taunted with anti-gay slurs.

Young people use these slurs in two different ways, one generally derogatory and one referring insultingly to sexual orientation. Schools have a hard time policing either use.

Taunts and slurs, particularly the words "fag" and "faggot," were cited in more than half of the publicized schoolyard shootings of the last three years, according to Newberry. Columbine shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were called fags. So was Andy Williams, who sprayed a San Diego high school with gunfire last March, killing two people.

Anti-gay language first appears on elementary school playgrounds. "Kids at our school say, ‘That kid is sooo gay,’" said Julia Pernick, a classmate of Emmett’s in fourth grade at Chevy Chase Elementary. "They think it means stupid or unusual or strange."

The insults multiply in the emotionally precarious years of early adolescence. "If you’re too short, too tall, too fat, too skinny, you get targeted in middle school," said David Mumaugh, now a junior at Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda. "Kids sign their yearbooks, ‘See you next year, fag.’"

Sarah Rothe, an eighth-grader at Lake Braddock Middle School in Burke, Virginia, said such words "are as common as the word ‘like’" at her school. Classmate Christina Jagodnick said "there’s a big difference" between anti-gay slurs and other derogatory terms. "If we were to say other words which we all know are wrong," she said, "someone would stop us."

At Lake Braddock this year, according to students, a boy was targeted by classmates who glued his locker shut, writing the word "gay" on the outside. No one knew the boy’s sexual orientation, but the bullies called him names until, recently, he transferred to another school. The school would not comment on the situation.

Gay teens are reluctant to discuss personal harassment on the record for fear of attracting more. But when they’re offered anonymity, they won’t stop talking.

A junior at Magruder High School in Rockville, Maryland, said: "I have a lot of friends who say, ‘Oh, that’s so gay.’ They don’t associate it with homosexuality. You could plant that word in the dictionary for ‘stupid.’ Do I face a whole life of this?"

At Herndon High School in Herndon, Virginia, a junior said, “I was walking with a friend
down the hall and this kid yells, 'Faggot.' How am I supposed to defend who I am?'

When straight students are bullied, they usually can count on an adult coming to their aid, counselors say. Gays don't have that assurance. According to several surveys, four out of five gay and lesbian students say they don't know one supportive adult at school.

"Teachers are aware they may offend someone if they speak about homosexuality in anything other than negative terms," said Deborah Roffman, who teaches sex education in the Baltimore and Washington areas. "They don't know how to cross that street safely, so they don't even step off the curb."

A LONELY CAMPAIGN

Jerry Newberry and other educators suggest that anti-gay insults are increasing partly because gay youths and their supporters have become more assertive in trying to stop them. Justen Deal, 16, has fought such a campaign alone.

A cherubic-looking blond kid from south of Charleston, W.Va., Justen heard anti-gay words from the time he could talk, even used them himself on occasion. But by the age of 12, when he first suspected he was gay, "they made my skin crawl," he said.

Unlike children in other minority groups, he had no natural support group to comfort him. His parents had relinquished custody of him to his paternal grandmother, Patty Deal, when he was born, and her only knowledge of homosexuals was what she had seen on the TV comedy "Ellen."

She did her best once she found out in his eighth-grade year that he was gay. He had written a letter to his school counselor that Patty Deal read. She immediately sought psychiatric help for him, took him to a hospital on the night he overtook antidepressants, and enrolled him in a new middle school in Boone County.

Neither she nor Justen knows how, but rumors started flying at Sherman Junior High. "I was asked eight times a day if I was gay," Justen remembered. "I'd say no, or not say anything. That year is when I learned for sure that the things you hear about words not hurting is a fairy tale."

Justen thought he'd be safe from gay-bashing once he reached Sherman Senior High. He knew principal Theresa Lonker, a tough-looking administrator who sends students to detention for cursing. When she told Justen, "We'll look out for you," she seemed to mean it.

But he couldn't be everywhere. Name-calling started slowly in his freshman year and picked up this year, according to Justen's friend Lindsey Light. Fed up this past spring, Justen tried to do something about language in a very visible way.

He drafted a new harassment policy for Sherman High to include sexual orientation and levied it on Lonker's desk. He lobbied the county school superintendent, Steve Pauley, to rewrite the county's harassment policy.

He visited West Virginia Gov. Robert Wise's office asking the governor to convene a task force to investigate harassment. He testified before the legislature on an amendment to the state's hate crime bill that would have included protection based on sexual orientation. His comments made both Charleston newspapers, including the front page of the Daily Mail.

Some of his classmates were not exactly thrilled with the attention. They threw coins and paper wads at him on a school bus during a field trip and also one afternoon in a science class. "Everyone [in the class] heard me tell them to stop, but the teacher was in his own little world," Justen said.

The science teacher, Robert Britton, said he didn't realize at the time there was any harassment going on. "I heard [Justen] say something about stuff being thrown at him but I thought he was just talking about words," Britton said.

Justen's one-person language crusade was rebuffed at every turn. Principal Lonker said she never saw the recommendation for changing the school's harassment policy. Superintendent Pauley said he was reluctant to single out gay students for special mention. Gov. Wise's office declined to appoint a task force on the needs of gay students. The legislature voted against adding sexual orientation to its anti-harassment statute. By mid-April, Justen, feeling defeated, decided to change what he could: his school.

He transferred to Huntington High, about 90 miles north. The school has a sizable population of openly gay students, and friends found a gay couple with whom he could live.

On his last day at Sherman High, his grandmother waited for him in her blue Chevy Impala. She appeared both nervous and sad.

"I've always taught Justen to tell the truth," she said. "I reckon he just listened too good. I knew he'd leave one day—I just didn't know it would be so soon."

Justen didn't want to leave his grandma. But
despite Lonker's efforts to keep him safe at school, he said, he didn't feel safe and thus had a hard time keeping his mind on equations and Civil War battles. His pals had told him to shrug off the verbal digs, but he could not.

"My friends don't understand that every time I hear the word 'fag' it really hurts," he said. "It reminds me that I'm so far away from what kids see as normal."

Walking out of Sherman on that soggy Tuesday, buoyed by the hugs of several students and his principal, he said, "It was a good day. I only heard the word 'faggot' four times."
A Question of Class

Dorothy Allison

The first time I heard "They're different than us. They don't value human life the way we do," I was in high school in central Florida. The man speaking was an army recruiter talking to a bunch of boys, telling them what the army was really like, what they could expect "overseas." A cold angry feeling swept over me. I had heard the word they pronounced in that same callous tone before. They, those people over there, those people who are not us, they die so easily, kill each other so casually. They are different. "We," I thought, "me."

When I was six or eight years old back in Greenville, South Carolina, I heard that same matter-of-fact tone of dismissal applied to me. "Don't you play with her. I don't want you talking to them." Me and my family, we had always been they. Who am I? Who are my people? We die so easily, disappear so completely—we/they, the poor and the queer. I hugged my bony white-trash fists to my stubborn lesbian mouth. The rage was a good feeling, stronger and purer than the shame that followed it, the fear and the sudden urge to run and hide, to deny, to pretend I did not know who I was and what the world would do to me.

My people were not remarkable. We were ordinary, but even so we were mythical. We were the they everyone talks about, the ungrateful poor. I grew up trying to run away from the fate that destroyed so many of the people I loved, and having learned the habit of hiding, I found that I also had learned to hide from myself. I did not know who I was, only that I did not want to be they, the ones who are destroyed or dismissed to make the real people, the important people, feel safer. By the time I understood that I was queer, that habit of hiding was deeply set in me, so deeply that it was not a choice but an instinct. Hide, hide to survive, I thought, knowing that if I told the truth about my life, my family, my sexual desire, my real history, then I would move over into that unknown territory, the land of they, would never have the chance to name my own life, to understand it or claim it.

Why are you so afraid? my lovers and friends have asked me the many times when I have suddenly seemed to become a stranger, someone who would not speak to them, would not do the things they believed I should do, simple things like applying for a job, or a grant, or some award they were sure I could acquire easily. Entitlement, I have told them, is a matter
of feeling like *we*, not *they*. But it has been hard for me to explain, to make them understand. You think you have a right to things, a place in the world, I try to say. You have a sense of entitlement I don't have, a sense of your own importance. I have explained what I know over and over again, in every possible way I can, but I have never been able to make clear the degree of my fear, the extent to which I feel myself denied, not only that I am queer in a world that hates queers but that I was born poor into a world that despises the poor. The need to explain is part of why I write fiction. I know that some things must be felt to be understood, that despair can never be adequately analyzed; it must be lived.

As a feminist activist, I remember long conversations about the mind/body split, the way we compartmentalize our lives to survive. For years, I thought that concept referred to the way I had separated my life as a feminist activist from the passionate secret life in which I acted on my sexual desires, and I was convinced that the fracture was fairly simple and would be healed when there was time and clarity—at about the same point when I might begin to understand sex. I never imagined that it was not a split but a splintering, and that I would pass whole portions of my life—days, months, years—in pure directed progress, getting up every morning and setting to work, working so hard and so continually that I avoided examining in any way what I knew about my life. Busywork became a trance state. I ignored who I really was and how I became that person, continued in that daily progress, became an automaton who was what she did.

For years I tried to disappear, to become one with the lesbian feminist community so as to feel real and valuable. I did not know that I was hiding, blinding in for safety the same way I had done in high school or college. I did not recognize the impulse to forget. I believed that all those things I did not talk about, or even let myself think too much about, were not important, that none of them defined me. I had constructed a life, an identity in which I took pride, an alternative lesbian family in which I felt safe, and I did not even realize that I had almost disappeared in order to become safe.

It is surprising how easy it was to live that life. Everyone and everything cooperated with the process. Everything in our society—books, television, movies, school, and fashion—is presented as if it is being seen by one pair of eyes, shaped by one set of hands, heard by one pair of ears. Even if you know you are not part of that imaginary creature, if you like country music, not symphonies, read books cynically, listen to the news unbelievingly, are lesbian, not heterosexual, and surround yourself with your own small deviant community—still you are shaped by that hegemony or your resistance to it. The only way I found to resist that homogenized view of the world was to make myself part of something larger than myself. As a feminist and a radical lesbian organizer, and later as a sex radical (which eventually became the term that referred to those of us who remained
both feminists and lesbians but who insisted on the importance of arguing for a right to sexual diversity), the need to belong, to feel safe, was just as important in my life as in any heterosexual, nonpolitical citizen's, and sometimes even more important because the rest of my life was so embattled.

I have known I was a lesbian since I was a teenager, and I have spent a good twenty years making peace with the effects of incest and physical abuse. But what may be the central fact of my life is that I was born in 1949 in Greenville, South Carolina, the bastard daughter of a poor white woman from a desperately poor family, a girl who had left the seventh grade the year before, who worked as a waitress and was just a month past fifteen when she had me. That fact, the inescapable impact of being born in a condition of poverty that this society finds shameful, contemptible, and somehow deserved, has dominated me to such an extent that I have spent my life trying to overcome or deny it. I have learned with great difficulty that the vast majority of people pretend that poverty is a voluntary condition, that the poor are different, less than fully human, or at the least less sensitive to hopelessness, despair, and suffering.

The first time I read Melanie Kaye Kantrowitz's poems, I experienced a frisson of recognition. It was not that my people had been "burned off the map" or murdered as hers had. No, we had been erased, encouraged to destroy ourselves, made invisible because we did not fit the myths of the middle class. Even now, past forty and stubbornly proud of my family, I feel the draw of that mythology, that romanticized, edited version of the poor. I find myself looking back and wondering what was real, what true. Within my family, so much was lied about, joked about, denied or told with deliberate indirection, an undercurrent of humiliation, or a brief pursed grimace that belies everything that has been said—everything, the very nature of truth and lies, reality and myth. What was real? The poverty depicted in books and movies was romantic, a kind of backdrop for the story of how it was escaped. The reality of self-hatred and violence was either absent or caricatured. The poverty I knew was dreary, deadening, shameful. My family was ashamed of being poor, of feeling hopeless. What was there to work for, to save money for, to fight for or struggle against? We had generations before us to teach us that nothing ever changed, and that those who did try to escape failed.

My mama had eleven brothers and sisters, of whom I can name only six. No one is left alive to tell me the names of the others. It was my grandmother who told me about my real daddy, a shiftless pretty man who was supposed to have married, had six children, and sold cut-rate life insurance to colored people out in the country. My mama married when I was a year old, but her husband died just after my little sister was born a year later. When I was five, Mama married the man she lived with until she died. Within the first year of their marriage Mama miscarried, and while we waited out in the hospital parking lot,
my stepfather molested me for the first time, something he continued to do until I was past thirteen. When I was eight or so, Mama took us away to a motel after my stepfather beat me so badly it caused a family scandal, but we returned after two weeks. Mama told me that she really had no choice; she could not support us alone. When I was eleven I told one of my cousins that my stepfather was molesting me. Mama packed up my sisters and me and took us away for a few days, but again, my stepfather swore he would stop, and again we went back after a few weeks. I stopped talking for a while, and I have only vague memories of the next two years.

My stepfather worked as a route salesman, my mama as a waitress, laundry worker, cook, or fruit packer. I could never understand how, since they both worked so hard and such long hours, we never had enough money, but it was a fact that was true also of my mama’s brothers and sisters, who worked in the mills or the furnace industry. In fact, my parents did better than anyone else in the family, but eventually my stepfather was fired and we hit bottom—nightmarish months of marshals at the door, repossessed furniture, and rubber checks. My parents worked out a scheme so that it appeared my stepfather had abandoned us, but instead he went down to Florida, got a new job, and rented us a house. In the dead of night, he returned with a U-Haul trailer, packed us up, and moved us south.

The night we left South Carolina for Florida, my mama leaned over the back seat of her old Pontiac and promised us girls, “It’ll be better there.” I don’t know if we believed her, but I remember crossing Georgia in the early morning, watching the red clay hills and swaying gray blankets of moss recede through the back window. I kept looking back at the trailer behind us, ridiculously small to contain everything we owned. Mama had, after all, packed nothing that wasn’t fully paid off, which meant she had only two things of worth, her washing and sewing machines, both of them tied securely to the trailer walls. Through the whole trip, I fantasized an accident that would burst that trailer, scattering old clothes and cracked dishes on the tarmac.

I was only thirteen. I wanted us to start over completely, to begin again as new people with nothing of the past left over. I wanted to run away completely from who we had been seen to be, who we had been. That desire is one I have seen in other members of my family, to run away. It is the first thing I think of when trouble comes, the geographic solution. Change your name, leave town, disappear, and make yourself over. What hides behind that solution is the conviction that the life you have lived, the person you are, are valueless, better off abandoned, that running away is easier than trying to change anything, that change itself is not possible, that death is easier than this life. Sometimes I think it is that conviction—more seductive than alcoholism or violence and more subtle than sexual hatred or gender injustice—that has dominated my life, and made real change so painful and difficult.
Moving to central Florida did not fix our lives. It did not stop my stepfather's violence, heal my shame, or make my mother happy. Once there our lives became dominated by my mother's illness and medical bills. She had a hysterectomy when I was about eight and endured a series of hospitalizations for ulcers and a chronic back problem. Through most of my adolescence she superstitiously refused to allow anyone to mention the word cancer. (Years later when she called me to tell me that she was recovering from an emergency mastectomy, there was bitter fatalism in her voice. The second mastectomy followed five years after the first, and five years after that there was a brief bout with cancer of the lymph system which went into remission after prolonged chemotherapy. She died at the age of fifty-six with liver, lung, and brain cancer.) When she was not sick, Mama, and my stepfather, went on working, struggling to pay off what seemed an insurmountable load of debts.

By the time I was fourteen, my sisters and I had found ways to discourage most of our stepfather's sexual advances. We were not close but we united against our stepfather. Our efforts were helped along when he was referred to a psychotherapist after losing his temper at work, and was prescribed psychotropic drugs that made him sullen but less violent. We were growing up quickly, my sisters moving toward dropping out of school, while I got good grades and took every scholarship exam I could find. I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school, and the fact that I went on to college was nothing short of astonishing.

Everyone imagines her life is normal, and I did not know my life was not everyone's. It was not until I was an adolescent in central Florida that I began to realize just how different we were. The people we met there had not been shaped by the rigid class structure that dominated the South Carolina Piedmont. The first time I looked around my junior high classroom and realized that I did not know who those people were—not only as individuals but as categories, who their people were and how they saw themselves—I realized also that they did not know me. In Greenville, everyone knew my family, knew we were trash, and that meant we were supposed to be poor, supposed to have grim low-paid jobs, have babies in our teens, and never finish school. But central Florida in the 1960s was full of runaways and immigrants, and our mostly white working-class suburban school sorted us out, not by income and family background, but by intelligence and aptitude tests. Suddenly I was boosted into the college-bound track, and while there was plenty of contempt for my inept social skills, pitiful wardrobe, and slow drawling accent, there was also something I had never experienced before, a protective anonymity, and a kind of grudging respect and curiosity about who I might become. Because they did not see poverty and hopelessness as a foregone conclusion for my life, I could begin to imagine other futures for myself.

Moving into that new world and meeting those new people meant that I began to see my family from a new vantage point.
I also experienced a new level of fear, a fear of losing what before had never been imaginable. My family's lives were not on television, not in books, not even comic books. There was a myth of the poor in this country, but it did not include us, no matter how hard I tried to squeeze us in. There was an idea of the good-poor—hardworking, ragged-but-clean, and intrinsically noble. I understood that we were the bad poor, the ungrateful: men who drank and couldn't keep a job; women, invariably pregnant before marriage, who quickly became worn, fat, and old from working too many hours and bearing too many children; and children with runny noses, watery eyes, and bad attitudes. My cousins quit school, stole cars, used drugs, and took dead-end jobs pumping gas or waiting tables. We were not noble, not grateful, not even hopeful. We knew ourselves despised.

But in that new country, we were unknown. The myth settled over us and glamorized us. I saw it in the eyes of my teachers, the Lions' Club representative who paid for my new glasses, and the lady from the Junior League who told me about the scholarship I had won. Better, far better, to be one of the mythical poor than to be part of the they I had known before. Don't let me lose this chance, I prayed, and lived in fear that I might suddenly be seen again as what I knew I really was.

As an adolescent, I thought that the way my family escaped South Carolina was like a bad movie. We fled like runaway serfs and the sheriff who would have arrested my stepfather seemed like a border guard. Even now, I am certain that if we had remained in South Carolina, I would have been trapped by my family's heritage of poverty, jail, and illegitimate children—that even being smart, stubborn, and a lesbian would have made no difference. My grandmother died when I was twenty and after Mama went home for the funeral, I had a series of dreams in which we still lived up in Greenville, just down the road from where Granny had died. In the dreams I had two children and only one eye, lived in a trailer, and worked at the textile mill. Most of my time was taken up with deciding when I would finally kill my children and myself. The dreams were so vivid, I became convinced they were about the life I was meant to have had, and I began to work even harder to put as much distance as I could between my family and me. I copied the dress, mannerisms, attitudes, and ambitions of the girls I met in college, changing or hiding my own tastes, interests, and desires. I kept my lesbianism a secret, forming a relationship with an effeminate male friend that served to shelter and disguise us both. I explained to friends that I went home so rarely because my stepfather and I fought too much for me to be comfortable in his house. But that was only part of the reason I avoided home, the easiest reason. The truth was that I feared the person I might become in my mama's house.

It is hard to explain how deliberately and thoroughly I ran away from my own life. I did not forget where I came from,
but I gritted my teeth and hid it. When I could not get enough scholarship money to pay for graduate school, I spent a year of blind rage working as a salad girl, substitute teacher, and maid. I finally managed to get a job by agreeing to take any city assignment where the Social Security Administration needed a clerk. Once I had a job and my own place far away from anyone in my family, I became sexually and politically active, joining the Women's Center support staff and falling in love with a series of middle-class women who thought my accent and stories thoroughly charming. The stories I told about my family, about South Carolina, about being poor itself, were all lies, carefully edited to seem droll or funny. I knew damn well that no one would want to hear the truth about poverty, the hopelessness and fear, the feeling that nothing you do will make any difference, and the raging resentment that burns beneath the jokes. Even when my lovers and I formed an alternative lesbian family, sharing all our resources, I kept the truth about my background and who I knew myself to be a carefully obscured mystery. I worked as hard as I could to make myself a new person, an emotionally healthy radical lesbian activist, and I believed completely that by remaking myself I was helping to remake the world.

For a decade, I did not go home for more than a few days at a time.

It is sometimes hard to make clear how much I have loved my family, that every impulse to hold them in contempt has sparked in me a counter-surge of stubborn pride. (What is equally hard to make clear is how much that impulse toward love and pride is complicated by an urge to fit us into the acceptable myths and theories of both mainstream society—Steven Spielberg movies or Taylor Caldwell novels, the one valorizing and the other caricaturing—and a lesbian feminist reinterpretation—the patriarchy as the villain and the trivialization of the choices the men and women of my family have made.) I have had to fight broad generalizations from every possible theoretical viewpoint. Traditional feminist theory has had a limited understanding of class differences or of how sexuality and self are shaped by both desire and denial. The ideology implies that we are all sisters who should turn our anger and suspicion only on the world outside the lesbian community. It is so simple to say the patriarchy did it, that poverty and social contempt are products of the world of the fathers. How often I felt a need to collapse my sexual history into what I was willing to share of my class background, to pretend that both my life as a lesbian and my life as a working-class escapee were constructed by the patriarchy. The difficulty is that I can't ascribe everything that has been problematic or difficult about my life simply and easily to the patriarchy, or even to the invisible and much-denied class structure of our society.

My Aunt Dot used to joke, "There are two or three things I know for sure, but never the same things and I'm never as
sure as I'd like." What I know for sure is that class, gender, sexual preference, and racial prejudice form an intricate lattice that both restricts and shapes our lives, and that resistance to that hatred is not a simple act. Claiming your identity in the caldron of hatred and resistance to hatred is more than complicated; it is almost unexplainable. I know that I have been hated as a lesbian by both "society" and the intimate world of my extended family, but I have also been hated or held in contempt (which is in some ways more debilitating and slippery than hatred) by lesbians for behavior and sexual practices shaped in large part by my class background. My suspicious, untrusting, stubborn nature (characteristic of the Southern working class) has helped me survive but it has also made me a person who feels no safety within the lesbian community. The fact that my sexuality is constructed within, and by, a butch-femme and leather fetishism is viewed with distaste or outright hatred. I am presumed to be misguided, damaged by my childhood experiences, or deliberately indulging in a hateful and retrograde sexual practice out of a selfish concentration on my own sexual satisfaction. I am expected to abandon these desires, to become the normalized lesbian who flirts with fetishization, who plays with gender roles and treats the historical categories of deviant desire with humor or gentle contempt, but never takes any of it so seriously as to claim a sexual identity based on these categories.

One of the strengths that I derive from my class background is that I have accustomed to contempt. I know that I have no chance of becoming what my detractors expect of me, and I believe that even the attempt to please them will only further engage their contempt, and my own self-contempt as well. Nonetheless, the relationship between the life I have lived and the way that life is seen by strangers has constantly invited a kind of self-mythologizing fantasy. It is tempting to play off or engage the stereotypes and misconceptions of mainstream culture rather than describe a difficult and sometimes painful reality.

One of the things I am trying to understand is how we internalize the myths of our society even as we hate and resist them. Perhaps this will be more understandable if I discuss specifically how some of these myths have shaped my life and how I have been able to talk about and change my own understanding of my family. I have felt a powerful temptation to write about my family as a kind of moral tale with us as the heroes and the middle and upper classes as the villains. It would be within the romantic myth, for example, to pretend that we were the kind of noble Southern whites portrayed in the movies, mill workers for generations until driven out of the mills by alcoholism and a family propensity to rebellion and union talk. But that would be a lie. The truth is that no one in my family ever joined a union. Taken as far as it can go, the myth of the poor would make my family over into union organizers or people broken by the failure of the unions. The reality of my family is far more complicated and lacks the cardboard nobility of the myth.
As far as my family was concerned, union organizers, like preachers, were of a different class, suspect and hated as much as they might be admired for what they were supposed to be trying to achieve. Serious belief in anything—any political ideology, any religious system, or any theory of life's meaning and purpose—was seen as unrealistic. It was an attitude that bothered me a lot when I started reading the socially conscious novels I found in the paperback racks when I was eleven or so. I particularly loved Sinclair Lewis's novels and wanted to imagine my own family as part of the working man's struggle. But it didn't seem to be that simple.

"We were not joiners," my Aunt Dot told me with a grin when I asked her about the union. My cousin Butch laughed at that, told me the union charged dues and said, "Hell, we can't even be persuaded to toss money in the collection plate. An't gonna give it to no fat union man." It shamed me that the only thing my family wholeheartedly believed in was luck, and the waywardness of fate. They held the dogged conviction that the admirable and wise thing to do was to try and keep a sense of humor, not to whine or cower, and to trust that luck might someday turn as good as it had been bad—and with just as much reason. Becoming a political activist with an almost religious fervor was the thing I did that most outraged my family and the Southern working-class community they were part of.

Similarly, it was not my sexuality, my lesbianism, that was seen by my family as most rebellious; for most of my life, no one but my mama took my sexual preference very seriously. It was the way I thought about work, ambition, and self-respect that seemed incomprehensible to my aunts and cousins. They were waitresses, laundry workers, and counter girls. I was the one who went to work as a maid, something I never told any of them. They would have been angry if they had known, though the fact that some work was contemptible was itself a difficult notion. They believed that work was just work, necessary, that you did what you had to do to survive. They did not believe so much in taking pride in doing your job as they did in stubbornly enduring hard work and hard times when you really didn’t have much choice about what work you did. But at the same time they did believe that there were some forms of work, including maid's work, that were only for black people, not white, and while I did not share that belief, I knew how intrinsic it was to how my family saw the world. Sometimes I felt as if I straddled cultures and belonged on neither side. I would grind my teeth at what I knew was my family's unquestioning racism but still take pride in their pragmatic endurance, but more and more as I grew older what I truly felt was a deep estrangement from the way they saw the world, and gradually a sense of shame that would have been completely incomprehensible to them.

"Long as there's lunch counters, you can always find work," I was told by both my mother and my aunts, and they'd add, "I can always get me a little extra with a smile." It was obvious that there was supposed to be nothing shameful about it, that
needy smile across a lunch counter, that rueful grin when you didn't have rent, or the half-provocative, half-begging way my mama could cajole the man at the store to give her a little credit. But I hated it, hated the need for it and the shame that would follow every time I did it myself. It was begging as far as I was concerned, a quasi-prostitution that I despised even while I continued to use it (after all, I needed the money). But my mother, aunts, and cousins had not been ashamed, and my shame and resentment pushed me even further away from them.

"Just use that smile," my girl cousins used to joke, and I hated what I knew they meant. After college, when I began to support myself and study feminist theory, I did not become more understanding of the women of my family but more contemptuous. I told myself that prostitution is a skilled profession and my cousins were never more than amateurs. There was a certain truth in this, though like all cruel judgments made from the outside, it ignored the conditions that made it true. The women in my family, my mother included, had sugar daddies, not johns, men who slipped them money because they needed it so badly. From their point of view they were nice to those men because the men were nice to them, and it was never so direct or crass an arrangement that they would set a price on their favors. They would never have described what they did as prostitution, and nothing made them angrier than the suggestion that the men who helped them out did it just for their favors. They worked for a living, they swore, but this was different.

I always wondered if my mother had hated her sugar daddy, or if not him then her need for what he offered her, but it did not seem to me in memory that she had. Her sugar daddy had been an old man, half-crippled, hesitant and needy; and he treated my mama with enormous consideration and, yes, respect. The relationship between them was painful because it was based on the fact that she and my stepfather could not make enough money to support the family. Mama could not refuse her sugar daddy's money, but at the same time he made no assumptions about that money buying anything she was not already offering. The truth was, I think, that she genuinely liked him, and only partly because he treated her so well.

Even now, I am not sure whether or not there was a sexual exchange between them. Mama was a pretty woman and she was kind to him, a kindness he obviously did not get from anyone else in his life, and he took extreme care not to cause her any problems with my stepfather. As a teenager with an adolescent's contempt for moral failings and sexual complexity of any kind, I had been convinced that Mama's relationship with that old man was contemptible and also that I would never do such a thing. The first time a lover of mine gave me money, and I took it, everything in my head shifted. The amount she gave me was not much to her but it was a lot to me and I needed it. I could not refuse it, but I hated myself for taking it and I hated her for giving it to me. Worse, she had much less grace about my need than my mama's sugar daddy had displayed.
toward her. All that bitter contempt I had felt for my needy
cousins and aunts raged through me and burned out the love
I had felt. I ended the relationship quickly, unable to forgive
myself for selling what I believed should only be offered
freely—not sex but love itself.

When the women in my family talked about how hard they
worked, the men would spit to the side and shake their heads.
Men took real jobs—hard, dangerous, physically daunting work.
They went to jail, not just the hard-eyed, careless boys who
scared me with their brutal hands and cold eyes, but their gen-
tler, softer brothers. It was another family thing, what people
expected of my mama’s family, my people. “His daddy’s that
one was sent off to jail in Georgia, and his uncle’s another. Like
as not, he’s just the same,” you’d hear people say of boys so
young they still had their milk teeth. We were always driving
down to the county farm to see somebody, some uncle, cousin,
or nameless male relation. Shaven-headed, sullen and stunned,
they wept on Mama’s shoulder or begged my aunts to help. “I
didn’t do nothing, Mama,” they’d say and it might have been
true, but if even we didn’t believe them, who would? No one
told the truth, not even about how their lives were destroyed.

When I was eight years old, Butch, one of my favorite
cousins, went to jail for breaking into pay phones with another
boy. The other boy was returned to the custody of his parents.
Butch was sent to the boys’ facility at the county farm and after
three months, my mama took us down there to visit, carrying
a big basket of fried chicken, cold cornbread, and potato salad.
Along with a hundred others we sat out on the lawn with Butch
and watched him eat like he hadn’t had a full meal in the whole
three months. I stared at his head, which had been shaved near
bald, and his ears, which were newly marked with fine blue
scars from the carelessly handled razor. People were laughing,
music was playing, and a tall lazy man in uniform walked past
us chewing on toothpicks and watching us all closely. Butch
kept his head down, his face hard with hatred, only looking
back at the guard when he turned away:

“Sons-a-bitches,” he whispered, and my mama shushed
him. We all sat still when the guard turned back to us. There
was a long moment of quiet and then that man let his face relax
into a big wide grin.

“Uh-huh,” he said. That was all he said. Then he turned
and walked away. None of us spoke. None of us ate any more.
Butch went back inside soon after and we left. When we got
back to the car, my mama sat there for a while crying quietly.
The next week Butch was reported for fighting and had his stay
extended by six months.

Butch was fifteen. He never went back to school and after
jail he couldn’t join the army. When he finally did come home
we never talked, never had to talk. I knew without asking that
the guard had had his little revenge, knew too that my cousin
would break into another phone booth as soon as he could,
but do it sober and not get caught. I knew without asking the
source of his rage, the way he felt about clean, well-dressed,
contemptuous people who looked at him like his life wasn't as
important as a dog's. I knew because I felt it too. That guard
had looked at me and Mama with the same expression he used
on my cousin: We were trash. We were the ones they built the
county farm to house and break. The boy who had been sent
home had been the son of a deacon in the church, the man
who managed the hardware store.

As much as I hated that man, and his boy, there was a way
in which I also hated my cousin. He should have known better,
I told myself, should have known the risk he ran. He should
have been more careful. As I became older and started living
on my own, it was a litany that I used against myself even more
angrily than I used it against my cousin. I knew who I was, knew
that the most important thing I had to do was protect myself
and hide my despised identity, blend into the myth of both the
"good" poor and the reasonable lesbian. Even when I became
a feminist activist, that litany went on reverberating in my head,
but by then it had become a groundnote, something so deep
and omnipresent, I no longer heard it even when everything I
did was set to the cadence that it established.

By 1975, I was earning a meager living as a photographer's
assistant in Tallahassee, Florida, but the real work of my life
was my lesbian feminist activism, the work I did with the local
Women's Center and the committee to found a Feminist Studies
Department at Florida State University. Part of my role as I saw
it was to be a kind of evangelical lesbian feminist, and to help
develop a political analysis of this woman-hating society. I did
not talk about class, more than by giving lip service to how we
all needed to think about it, the same way I thought we all
needed to think about racism. I was a serious and determined
person, living in a lesbian collective, studying each new book
that purported to address feminist issues and completely driven
by what I saw as a need to revolutionize the world.

Fifteen years later, it's hard to convey just how reasonable
my life seemed to me at that time. I was not flippant, not con-
sciously condescending, not casual about how difficult remaking
social relations would be, but like so many women of my gen-
eration, I believed absolutely that I had a chance to make a
difference with my life, and I was willing to give my life for the
chance to make that difference. I expected hard times, long
slow periods of self-sacrifice and difficult work, expected to be
hated and attacked in public, to have to set aside personal desire,
lovers, and family in order to be part of something greater and
more important than my individual concerns. At the same time
I was working ferociously hard at taking my desires, my sex-
uality, my needs as a woman and a lesbian more seriously. I
believed I was making the personal political revolution with my
life every moment, whether I was scrubbing the floor of the
child-care center, making up a new budget for the women's
lecture series at the university, editing the local feminist magazine, or starting a women’s bookstore. That I was constantly exhausted, had no health insurance, did hours of dreary unpaid work and still sneaked out of my collective household to date butch women my housemates thought retrograde and sexist, never interfered with my sense of total commitment to the feminist revolution. I was not living in a closet, I had compartmentalized my own mind to such an extent that I never questioned why I did what I did. I trusted that it would all come clear in time, perhaps after the revolution—a mystical concept I took quite seriously—when I would also catch up on my sleep and, perhaps, radicalize my sex partners.

That oblivious concentration changed only when I began to write again for the first time since I had left college. The idea of writing fiction or essays seemed frivolous when there was so much work to be done, but everything changed when I found myself confronting emotions and ideas that could not be explained away or postponed for a feminist holiday. The way it happened was simple and completely unexpected. One week I was asked to speak to two completely divergent groups: an Episcopalian Sunday School class and a juvenile detention center. The Episcopalians were all white, well-dressed, highly articulate, nominally polite, and obsessed with getting me to tell them (without their having to ask directly) just what it was that two women did together in bed. The delinquents were all women, eighty percent black and Hispanic, dressed in green uniform dresses or blue jeans and workshirts, profane, rude, fearless, witty, and just as determined to get me to talk about what it was that two women did together in bed.

I tried to have fun with the Episcopalians, teasing them about their fears and insecurities, and being as bluntly honest as I could about my sexual practices. The Sunday School teacher, a man who had assured me of his liberal inclinations, kept blushing and stammering as the questions about my growing up and coming out became more detailed. When the meeting was over, I stepped out into the sunshine angry at the contemptuous attitude implied by all their questions, and though I did not know why, also so deeply depressed that I couldn’t even cry. The delinquents were different. Shameless, they had me blushing within the first few minutes, yelling out questions that were partly curious and partly a way of boasting about what they already knew.

“You butch or femme?” “You ever fuck boys?” “You ever want to?” “You want to have children?” “What’s your girlfriend like?” I finally broke up when one very tall confident girl leaned way over and called out, “Hey girlfriend! I’m getting out of here next weekend. What you doing that night?” I laughed so hard I almost choked. I laughed until we were all howling and giggling together. Even getting frisked as I left didn’t ruin my mood. I was still grinning when I climbed into the waterbed with my lover that night, grinning right up to the moment when she wrapped her arms around me and I burst into tears.
It is hard to describe the way I felt that night, the shock of recognition and the painful way my thoughts turned. That night I understood suddenly everything that happened to my cousins and me, understood it from a wholly new and agonizing perspective, one that made clear how brutal I had been to both my family and myself. I understood all over again how we had been robbed and dismissed, and why I had worked so hard not to think about it. I had learned as a child that what could not be changed had to go unspoken, and worse, that those who cannot change their own lives have every reason to be ashamed of that fact and to hide it. I had accepted that shame and believed in it, but why? What had I or my cousins really done to deserve the contempt directed at us? Why had I always believed us contemptible by nature? I wanted to talk to someone about all the things I was thinking that night, but I could not. Among the women I knew there was no one who would have understood what I was thinking, no other working-class women in the women’s collective where I was living. I began to suspect that we shared no common language to speak those bitter truths.

In the days after that I found myself remembering that afternoon long ago at the county farm, that feeling of being the animal in the zoo, the thing looked at and laughed at and used by the real people who watched us. For all his liberal convictions, that Sunday School teacher had looked at me with eyes that reminded me of Butch’s long-ago guard. Suddenly I felt thrown back into my childhood, into all the fears and convictions I had tried to escape. Once again I felt myself at the mercy of the important people who knew how to dress and talk, and would always be given the benefit of the doubt while I and my family would not.

I felt as if I was at the mercy of an outrage so old I could not have traced all the ways it shaped my life. I understood again that some are given no quarter, no chance, that all their courage, humor, and love for each other is just a joke to the ones who make the rules, and I hated the rule makers. Finally I also realized that part of my grief came from the fact that I no longer knew who I was or where I belonged. I had run away from my family, refused to go home to visit, and tried in every way to make myself a new person. How could I be working-class with a college degree? As a lesbian activist? I thought about the guards at the detention center, and the way they had looked at me. They had not stared at me with the same picture-window emptiness they turned on the girls who came to hear me, girls who were closer to the life I had been meant to live than I could bear to examine. The contempt in their eyes was contempt for me as a lesbian, different and the same, but still contempt.

While I raged, my girlfriend held me and comforted me and tried to get me to explain to her what was hurting me so bad, but I could not. She had told me so often about her awkward relationship with her own family, the father who owned his own business and still sent her checks every other month. She knew almost nothing about my family, only the jokes and
careful stories I had given her. Lying in her arms, I felt so alone
and at risk, I could not have explained anything at all. I thought
about those girls in the detention center and the stories they
told in brutal shorthand about their sisters, brothers, cousins,
and lovers. I thought about their one-note references to those
they had lost, never mentioning the loss of their own hopes,
their own futures, the bent and painful shape of their lives when
they would finally get free. Cried-out and dry-eyed, I lay watch-
ing my sleeping girlfriend and thinking about what I had not
been able to explain to her. After a few hours, I got up and
made some notes for a poem I wanted to write, a bare painful
litany of loss and grief shaped as a conversation between two
women, one who cannot understand the other and one who
cannot tell all she knows.

It took me a long time to take that poem from a raw lyric
of outrage and grief to a piece of fiction that explained to me
something I had never let myself look at too closely before—
the whole process of running away, of closing up inside yourself,
of hiding. It has taken me most of my life to understand that,
to see how and why those of us who are born poor and different
are so driven to give ourselves away or lose ourselves, but most
of all, simply to disappear as the people we really are. By the
time that poem became the story “River of Names,” I had made
the decision to reverse that process, to claim my family, my true
history, and to tell the truth not only about who I was but about
the temptation to lie.

The lesbian sex wars supposedly began in 1982, with the Women
Against Pornography pickets who denounced Joan Nestle, Am-
ber Hollibaugh, Pat Califia, and me at the Barnard Sex Confer-
cence. For me, however, the beginning was in the late 1970s,
when the compartmentalized life I had created burst open. It
began when I started to write and work out what I really thought
about my family, and when I began to lose patience with my
own fear of what the women I worked with—mostly lesbians
—thought of who I slept with and what we did together. That
was when I went back to my family. When schisms de
developed
within my community; when I was no longer able to hide within
the regular dyke network; when I was no longer able to justify
my life by constant political activism or distract myself by sleep-
ing around; when my sexual promiscuity, butch-femme role-
playing, and exploration of sadomasochistic sex became part of
what was driving me out of my community of choice—I went
home again. I went home to my mother and my sisters, to visit,
talk, argue, and begin to understand.

Once home I saw that, as far as my family was concerned,
lesbians were lesbians whether they wore suitcoats or leather
jackets. Moreover, in all that time when I had not made peace
with myself, my family had managed to make a kind of peace
with me. My girlfriends were treated like slightly odd versions
of my sisters’ husbands, while I was simply the daughter who
had always been difficult but was still a part of their lives. The
result was that I started trying to confront what had made me
unable to really talk to my sisters for so many years. I discovered that they no longer knew who I was either, and it took time and lots of listening to each other to rediscover my sense of family, and my love for them.

It is only as the child of my class and my unique family background that I have been able to put together what is for me a meaningful politics, gained a sense of why I believe in activism, why self-revelation is so important for lesbians, reexamining the way we are seen and the way we see ourselves. There is no all-purpose feminist analysis that explains away all the complicated ways our sexuality and core identity are shaped, the way we see ourselves as parts of both our birth families and the extended family of friends and lovers we invariably create within the lesbian community. For me the bottom line has simply become the need to resist that omnipresent fear, that urge to hide and disappear, to disguise my life, my desires, and the truth about how little any of us understand—even as we try to make the world a more just and human place for us all. Most of all I have tried to understand the politics of they, why human beings fear and stigmatize the different while secretly dreading that they might be one of the different themselves. Class, race, sexuality, gender, all the categories by which we categorize and dismiss each other need to be examined from the inside.

The horror of class stratification, racism, and prejudice is that some people begin to believe that the security of their families and community depends on the oppression of others, that for some to have good lives others must have lives that are mean and horrible. It is a belief that dominates this culture; it is what made the poor whites of the South so determinedly racist and the middle class so contemptuous of the poor. It is a myth that allows some to imagine that they build their lives on the ruin of others, a secret core of shame for the middle class, a goad and a spur to the marginal working class, and cause enough for the homeless and poor to feel no constraints on hatred or violence. The power of the myth is made even more apparent when we examine how within the lesbian and feminist communities, where so much attention has been paid to the politics of marginalization, there is still so much exclusion and fear, so many of us who do not feel safe even within our chosen communities.

I grew up poor, hated, the victim of physical, emotional, and sexual violence, and I know that suffering does not ennoble. It destroys. To resist destruction, self-hatred, or lifelong hopelessness, we have to throw off the conditioning of being despised, the fear of becoming that they that is talked about so dismissively, to refuse lying myths and easy moralities, to see ourselves as human, flawed and extraordinary. All of us—extraordinary.
That Moment of Visibility

I never realized how much my working-class background and beliefs played a role in my education. My family, friends, and neighbors never placed much importance on college. Instead, we were strongly encouraged to find work immediately after high school so we could support ourselves financially. My sisters and I were encouraged to do secretarial work until we married. There was no particular positive status attached to obtaining a degree except maybe the chance of making a lot of money. In fact, friends who went to college were looked at somewhat suspiciously. Among my reference group, college was often seen as a way to get out of having to work.

No one in my family had ever gone to college. It was not financially feasible and a college environment was equal to the unknown. It really was scary terrain. When I decided to go to a local community college after having worked for five years in a secretarial position, family and friends could not understand my decision. Why would I choose college when I already had a job? I could pay bills, buy what I needed, and I had a savings account. So I started by taking a course a semester—and I barely got through the first course. Although I received a good grade, I felt incredibly isolated, like I was an impostor who did not belong in a classroom. I had no idea how someone in college was supposed to act. I stayed silent, scared, and consciously invisible most of the time. I was not even close to making a commitment to a college education when I signed up for a second course—but because my job paid for it (one of the benefits), I felt I had nothing to lose. I signed up for Introduction to Juvenile Delinquency and midway through, our class received an assignment to do a fifteen-page self-analysis applying some of the theories we were learning. The thought of consciously revealing myself when I was trying so hard not to look, act, or be different was not something I was willing (or, I think, able at the time) to do. When I discussed the assignment with the people close to me, they agreed that the assignment was too personal and revealing. I decided not to do it and I also decided that college was probably not for me.

I went to see my professor (who was the only woman in her department) to let her know that I was refusing to do the assignment and would not complete the course. We had spoken two or three times outside of class and she knew a little about me. I knew that she was also from a working-class background and had returned to school after working some years. I felt the least I could do was tell her I was quitting the class. When I said that I was unwilling to do the assignment, she stared at me for some time, and then asked me what I would prefer to write about. I was stunned that I was noticed and was being asked what I would like to do. When I had no reply, she asked if I would write a paper on the importance of dissent. All I could think to say was yes. I completed the course successfully and found an ally in my department. I can't overstate the importance of that moment of acknowledgement. It was the first time I felt listened to. It was the moment when you feel safe enough to reveal who you are, the deep breath you can finally take when you figure out that the person you're talking to understands, appreciates, and may even share your identity.

I think of this experience as a turning point for me—when I realized that despite all my conscious efforts to be invisible and to "pass," it was that moment of visibility and acknowledgment that kept me in school.

Rose B. Pascarell
ALL WE REALLY WANT TO DO

In the fall of 2000 we were invited to attend a prestigious international conference in Washington, D.C., to launch the discipline of disability studies onto the academic world. We eagerly accepted the invitation and looked forward to a stimulating few days in interaction with academic colleagues from around the globe. This is a scenario not unknown to many thousands of international academics. However, we would argue, our experiences as disabled academics set us apart from those of our nondisabled colleagues because of the discriminatory treatment we face in doing ordinary things that our nondisabled colleagues take for granted; in this case, using public transportation.

We recognize that using public transportation can be a difficult experience for all concerned, but our experiences differ. Disablers have the world still have their basic human rights denied to them, we feel uneasy about highlighting the personal difficulties of a few relatively privileged ones from the minority world. But as academics working in a discipline where personal experience is shared, we understand the world and the ways it operates, we need no apologies for describing our experiences. Discriminatory and degrading treatment though we will try to use these personal experiences as a framework for broader analysis. In so doing, initially Mike will describe his experiences of flying to Washington, D.C., for the conference and then Beth will discuss her attempt to use the local transportation system to socialize with academic colleagues. We will begin by considering some of the general issues raised.

LEAVING ON A JET PLANE [MIKE]

When I received an invitation to attend the conference in Washington, D.C., I was unsure whether or not to accept because it would mean that I would have to fly from Britain to the United States and I have had many unpleasant travel experiences in the past. I have been ignored, abused, patronized, dropped on the floor, and often handled worse than the dead meat that is served to the passengers on the flight, all because I use an electric wheelchair and require manual assistance. It seems incredible that when we have the technology to send people into space, we still find it difficult to enable disabled people to get on and off airplanes with their dignity and self-respect intact. However, I decided that the promise of the conference plus the opportunity to socialize with other academics with interests similar to mine was too good to miss.

The first hassle, I knew from experience, would be in trying to find an airline that would permit me to prebook seats that would give me enough legroom to sit comfortably and safely. "It’s not allowed," "IATA regulations don’t permit it," "It’s up to the Captain," "We don’t know how the plane will be loaded," "You’re not allowed to block exits," "We don’t know what plane we will be using" are all excuses I have been given in the past. After several angry phone calls and an exchange of letters, I am eventually allowed to book seats that will give me the legroom I require and I know that the first battle is over.

When I check in at Heathrow, London—one of the world’s busiest airports—the staff insist that I transfer out of my electric wheelchair and into one of their manual ones. I explain that that will mean me sitting in an uncomfortable chair for at least three hours as well as restricting my personal mobility. The equivalent for a nondisabled traveler would be the enforced wearing of someone else’s shoes while being denied access to refreshments, duty-free shopping, and so on. My request that I be allowed to remain in my own wheelchair until I board the plane is turned
down on health and safety grounds. I am told that the ground crew will not lift my wheelchair down the stairs from the gate to the tarmac for stowing in the hold.

Reluctantly I agree to get out of my chair and, after a few minutes' wait, two men turn up with a manual wheelchair and proceed to lift me bodily into it, in full view of those queuing for the flight as well as anyone else who wants to watch. This was managed competently, but it is hardly appropriate treatment for anyone to endure. The two men then try to dismantle my electric wheelchair and disconnect the batteries. I explain that the chair does not dismantle and the batteries are dry cell and do not need to be disconnected. They tell me that they must disconnect the batteries anyway, and I insist that it is unnecessary.

At this point my wife, Joy, who is traveling with me as my personal assistant, intervenes and calls the supervisor. After a heated argument and several phone calls, it is agreed that dry cell batteries do not need to be disconnected and the men and my wheelchair disappear into the bowels of the airport. As I watch it go, there is no guarantee that they, or the ground crew who will lift it into the hold, will not disconnect the batteries or, indeed, remove them altogether. The experience of a friend of mine briefly comes to mind. She flew from Heathrow only to notice that her chair was still on the ground as the plane took off: Not only had they refused to load it but they had also neglected to tell her.

Some two hours later I am taken to the gate for boarding and told I will be loaded before the rest of the passengers, which would at least preserve my privacy, if not my dignity. Unfortunately, however, the two men designated to carry me onto the plane are late and only arrive as other passengers are being boarded. This means a further delay until I am taken to the door of the aircraft. On reaching this point, a small lifting chair is produced and I am transferred from the airport wheelchair onto it. It is wholly unsuitable because it has no arms and does not take into account the fact that I have no balance. Eventually I am strapped to it and carried onto the aircraft, which is now full.

I am carried past row after row of passengers until I reach my seat. I am then lifted bodily into the aircraft seat, but the space is very confined and does not give the lifters much room and the arms of the aircraft seat are not detachable. As a consequence of this, I am virtually dragged over the arm. What physical damage this is causing I don't know as I have no sensation in that part of my body, but the dragging does pull my trousers down and exposes large amounts of naked flesh to the rest of the passengers. Eventually I am placed in the seat, and my wife helps me to rearrange my clothing. I now settle down for the nine-hour flight but realize that I must moderate my food and liquid intake for it is impossible for me to get to the toilet on the aircraft.

We arrive in the Washington, D.C., airport, and a row breaks out between airport staff and cabin crew as to whose responsibility it is to get me off the aircraft. This causes delays and clearly angers a tired cabin crew who want, quite rightly, to get off the aircraft themselves and end their shift. The situation is eventually resolved when a member of the cabin crew and the flight engineer agree to lift me off the aircraft. This they do, but they are not trained to do so and once again I am dragged across the seats and my clothing again comes adrift.

In the terminal, I am informed that I must now transfer into one of the airport wheelchairs before proceeding to the collection point for our suitcases and my wheelchair. There are two problems with this: their wheelchair does not have detachable arms and there is no one to lift me. Another row breaks out and eventually two airport staff volunteer to lift me into the airport's chair. Again this is managed with great difficulty and some danger to all of us as they are willing but untrained.

Eventually I am reunited with my own chair and I begin to relax. I decide to complain formally and demand to see someone in charge. A supervisor appears and informs me that getting on and off the aircraft is my responsibility and that I should have been lifted off by my wife and two colleagues who are traveling with us; one [colleague] is himself disabled and the other has a history of chronic back problems. At this point I leave as I desperately need a drink and to get to the hotel to survey any damage that may have been inflicted. Once I am in bed, I find that I have severe lacerations and bruising to my buttocks. It takes me several hours before I am able to stop shaking. Still I am here and I look forward to the next four days, though in the back of my mind I know I have to go through it all again in order to get home.

**EVERYTHING IS BROKEN [BETH]**

Knowing that my British colleagues have a predilection for American blues, I make reservations at a supper club where we will meet. I first
met Mike and his colleague, Len, briefly at a conference in Chicago earlier in the year, and I found much in common with them. I am excited at the prospect of spending Sunday evening socializing and exchanging ideas with internationally renowned scholars on the first night of their visit to Washington, D.C.

Mike calls my home at about three o'clock on the Sunday afternoon of their arrival to say they are finally settled in at the hotel. He sounds perturbed, apparently due to mistreatment by airport employees, but still wishes to get together. We decide to meet at the blues club at seven o'clock that evening. Mike will contact the D.C. taxicab company to arrange for a wheelchair-accessible van.

About half an hour later, Mike calls back with our first piece of bad news: there is no wheelchair-accessible taxicab service to travel from one location to another within the District of Columbia. While you can go from D.C. into the Virginia or Maryland suburbs and back into D.C., the taxi service will not take you between locations within the District. I am astonished and baffled by the logic of this policy. I wonder if this is just a means to charge more by forcing disabled people to take lengthy detours into the suburbs and back again, or to discourage them from riding taxis altogether. We forgo any plan to find another music club that is both wheelchair and distance accessible, and choose instead to find a restaurant near the hotel where Mike, Joy, and Len are staying.

I plan to take the nine-mile ride from my home into the District via MetroAccess, the D.C. metropolitan area's paratransit system for disabled people. The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights law designed to prohibit discrimination and to ensure equal access to transportation, employment, public accommodations, public services, and telecommunications. The law mandates paratransit service, usually consisting of a fleet of wheelchair-accessible vans and perhaps some cars. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) sponsors MetroAccess paratransit service, but subcontracts the work out to local governments and other local fixed-route transit systems, including privately owned for-profit companies in the metropolitan area.

Being considered disabled under the ADA is not enough to be considered eligible for paratransit ridership; disabled people must go through a certification process. Applicants must complete a lengthy, two-part form, to be filled out by the applicant and a physician. Eligibility is based on a person's "functional limitation," assessed by an occupational therapist or other medical professional who is determined (and paid) by MetroAccess officials as qualified to judge each applicant's ability to ride public fixed-route transit. In the main, able-bodied medical professionals determine who is eligible and who is denied access to paratransit. They are gatekeepers who lack personal expertise about what it is like to be disabled by an inaccessible environment.

Applicants are judged on their ability to walk or travel up to one-quarter of a mile, travel independently to and from bus stops, identify the correct bus or bus stop to board or get off, get on or off a bus or train using a lift, and ask for and understand instructions to board, ride, and disembark. Disabled people often encounter a well-crafted double-bind in the assessment process: if assessors determine that applicants' "mobility skills" are adequate, they are deemed able to ride public fixed-route transit, and thus declared ineligible for MetroAccess. But if assessors decide that applicants lack good mobility skills, they may be denied MetroAccess services and told to get additional mobility training.

Like hundreds of other disabled workers, I rely on MetroAccess to take me to and from work. I rely on it to get me to school at least twice a week, to out-of-office work-related appointments, to medical appointments, and to social engagements. MetroAccess has caused me to be more than one hour late for work appointments, school, and doctors' appointments more times than I can count, and I have missed some of these obligations altogether when my rides failed to show up. During my first semester in school, MetroAccess failed to pick me up after class one time, and I was left stranded in D.C., at ten-thirty at night, in freezing cold weather, with locked school buildings all around me and with no way home.

Routing has little or no logic. Passengers are forced to share rides that take them in opposite directions than intended. While MetroAccess policy states that passengers are not supposed to be on the van for twenty minutes longer than it would normally take for them to go from one particular destination to another, policy often differs from practice. Once, I rode on the van around the District exactly one hour, for what should have been a twenty-minute ride had we taken a direct route. At the end of that hour, I looked out the window and saw the exact location where I had been picked up. I had been
driven around in one big circle, no closer to home than I was before I boarded the van.

Once, when the van came to take me to school, I asked if I would be ride-sharing and, if so, how long the trip would take. Learning that my shared ride would take an hour and a half—time I didn’t have—I asked to be let off the van. The driver refused, saying “You are already on the van. You must stay on the van until we reach your destination. Go sit down and buckle your seat belt.” I said, “We are still at my house. The van is not moving. Let me off.” Again he refused and ordered me to sit down. I refused. He radioed the dispatch office to find out what he should do with me. The dispatcher said he would have to check with a supervisor. The minutes ticked by. Finally, after ten minutes, they agreed to let me off the van. Other times, when I protested circuitous routing and unjustifiable amounts of time riding around, drivers scolded me, saying such things as “Just sit there and be quiet. Your ride costs only $2.20, so you should be grateful for it.” But MetroAccess is not a charity-based service. I am a taxpayer who contributes to the system, including to its employee salaries. Sometimes, I feel that they treat me as if I were a sack of groceries, as something less than human. My MetroAccess experiences are not unique. When I ride with other disabled people, we often swap MetroAccess horror stories.

Because my MetroAccess reservations have “disappeared” from manifests so often, I have learned to check and recheck with the scheduling office to make sure my ride is still listed. Nevertheless, this is no guarantee that the driver will arrive on time, or at all for that matter. Therefore, I made sure to call the reservation and dispatch center earlier in the day to confirm that I was, indeed, on the manifest for a six o’clock pickup to travel into D.C. to meet Mike, Joy, and Len, and then to go back home four hours later.

Now it’s six o’clock and the van is not here. Tension vaguely gnaws at the back of my neck, causing the muscles to stiffen and ache. I know that MetroAccess allows itself a fifteen-minute window on either side of my pickup time, so I wait until six-fifteen before I call the office. The dispatcher reassures me that the van is scheduled to pick me up at six p.m. and that it should be there momentarily. By six-thirty my anxiety has given way to frustration. I call the dispatch office again. A man answers. I say, “My ride was supposed to be here a half hour ago. Would you please radio the driver?” After placing me on hold for ten minutes, he tells me, “I think we have a mix-up. I’ll call you back in a few minutes.” Twenty minutes later, he calls to say, “We booked you on Fastran (one of the local government’s services), but Fastran doesn’t run on weekends.”

I know that by now my colleagues are expecting me to meet them at the hotel bar. I call their room repeatedly and leave messages. I call the hotel to have them paged at the bar, but there is no paging system there. There is nothing I can do but wait to hear from them. Upset and disappointed, I resign myself to the fact that I will not have my long-awaited evening with my British colleagues.

MAY THE LIGHT SHINE ON THE TRUTH SOMEDAY

We have recounted our own personal experiences of global and local transport systems, and we feel crushed by them. We can (and do) complain vociferously, campaign for the law to be changed, demonstrate on the streets, take our stories to the media, and so on, but complaints are easily managed by large organizations. Laws take a long time to change, and while taking to the streets is personally empowering, it will not enable us to go to the next conference, let alone socialize together when we are there.

There are things we need to understand from these experiences. To begin with, it is testament to the global power of the airlines that, even though there is civil rights legislation in both Britain and America, air travel is exempt from those laws. Clearly, the airline industry pays little or no attention to the needs of disabled travelers. As each new generation of aircraft comes off the drawing board, we continue to be designed out, rather than included in. With regard to ground transportation, government subcontracting of public services to for-profit companies dramatically shifts priorities away from democratic principles of inclusion and toward the bottom line of profit margins instead.

It is a fact that American civil rights legislation is the most comprehensive and enforceable in the world. Still it fails to ensure that disabled American citizens and their guests can move around their communities when and how they choose. This failure suggests that such legislation promises much more than it delivers. Indeed, we even begin to wonder whether such legislation is nothing more than a confidence trick, actually protecting the interests of the rich and powerful
rather than ensuring that the rights of all citizens are actually being properly addressed.

Finally, and most importantly, we would like to return to a point we made earlier. If these are the kinds of everyday experiences that we, as relatively privileged and empowered disabled people, have to endure, what is life really like for those millions of underprivileged and disempowered disabled people who exist in all parts of the world? In talking about our own personal experiences, we hope we have shone some light on the truth of just how far we have to go in order to build a world that fully includes all disabled people.
Racism in the English Language

Robert B. Moore

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

An integral part of any culture is its language. Language not only develops in conjunction with a society’s historical, economic and political evolution; it also reflects that society’s attitudes and thinking. Language not only expresses ideas and concepts but actually shapes thought. If one accepts that our dominant white culture is racist, then one would expect our language—an indispensable transmitter of culture—to be racist as well. Whites, as the dominant group, are not subjected to the same abusive characterization by our language that people of color receive. Aspects of racism in the English language that will be discussed in this essay include terminology, symbolism, politics, ethnocentrism, and context.

Before beginning our analysis of racism in language we would like to quote part of a TV film review which shows the connection between language and culture.

Depending on one’s culture, one interacts with time in a very distinct fashion. One example which gives some cross-cultural insights into the concept of time is language. In Spanish, a watch is said to “walk.” In English, the watch “runs.” In German, the watch “functions.” And in French, the watch “marches.” In the Indian culture of the Southwest, people do not refer to time in this way. The value of the watch is displaced with the value of “what time it’s getting to be.” Viewing these five cultural perspectives of time, one can see some definite emphasis and values that each culture places on time. For example, a cultural perspective may provide a clue to why the negative stereotype of the slow and lazy Mexican who lives in the “Land of Manana” exists in the Anglo value system, where time “flies,” the watch “runs” and “time is money.”

A SHORT PLAY ON “BLACK” AND “WHITE” WORDS

Some may blackly (angrily) accuse me of trying to blacken (defame) the English language, to give it a black eye (a mark of shame) by writing such black words (hostile). They may denigrate (to cast aspersions; to darken) me by accusing me of being blackhearted (malevolent), of having a black outlook (pessimistic, dismal) on life, of being a blackguard (scoundrel)—which would certainly be a black mark (detrimental fact) against me. Some may black-brow (scowl at) me and hope that a black cat crosses in front of me because of this black deed. I may become a black sheep (one who causes shame or embarrassment because of deviation from the accepted standards), who will be blackballed (ostracized) by being placed on a blacklist (list of undesirables) in an attempt to blackmail (to force or coerce into a particular action) me to retract my words. But attempts to blackjack (to compel by threat) me will have a Chinaman’s chance of success, for I am not a yellow-bellied Indian-giver of words, who will whitewash (cover up or gloss over vices or crimes) a black lie (harmful, inexcusable). I challenge the purity and innocence (white) of the English language. I don’t see things in black and white (entirely bad or entirely good) terms, for I am a white man (marked by upright firmness) if there ever was one. However, it would be a black day when I would not call a spade a spade,” even though some will suggest a white man calling the English language racist is like the pot calling the kettle black. While many may be niggardly (grudging, scanty) in their support, others will be honest and decent—and to them I say, that’s very white of you (honest, decent).

The preceding is of course a white lie (not intended to cause harm), meant only to illustrate some examples of racist terminology in the English language.

OBVIOUS BIGOTRY

Perhaps the most obvious aspect of racism in language would be terms like “nigger,” “spook,”
“chink,” “spic,” etc. While these may be facing increasing social disdain, they certainly are not dead. Large numbers of white Americans continue to utilize these terms. “Chink,” “gook,” and “slant-eyes” were in common usage among U.S. troops in Vietnam. An NBC nightly news broadcast, in February 1972, reported that the basketball team in Pekin, Illinois, was called the “Pekin Chinks” and noted that even though this had been protested by Chinese Americans, the term continued to be used because it was easy, and meant no harm. Spiro Agnew’s widely reported “fat Jap” remark and the “little Jap” comment of lawyer John Wilson during the Watergate hearings, are surface indicators of a deep-rooted Archie Bunkerism.

Many white people continue to refer to Black people as “colored,” as for instance in a July 30, 1975 Boston Globe article on a racist attack by whites on a group of Black people using a public beach in Boston. One white person was quoted as follows:

We’ve always welcomed good colored people in South Boston but we will not tolerate radical blacks or Communists... Good colored people are welcome in South Boston, black militants are not.

Many white people may still be unaware of the disdain many African Americans have for the term “colored,” but it often appears that whether used intentionally or unintentionally, “colored” people are “good” and “know their place,” while “Black” people are perceived as “uppity” and “threatening” to many whites. Similarly, the term “boy” to refer to African American men is no longer acknowledged to be a demeaning term, though still in common use. Other terms such as “the pot calling the kettle black” and “calling a spade a spade” have negative racial connotations but are still frequently used, as for example when President Ford was quoted in February 1976 saying that even though Daniel Moynihan had left the U.N., the U.S. would continue “calling a spade a spade.”

COLOR SYMBOLISM

The symbolism of white as positive and black as negative is pervasive in our culture, with the black/white words used in the beginning of this essay only one of many aspects. “Good guys” wear white hats and ride white horses, “bad guys” wear black hats and ride black horses. Angels are white, and devils are black. The definition of black includes “without any moral light or goodness, evil, wicked, indicating disgrace, sinful,” while that of white includes “morally pure, spotless, innocent, free from evil intent.”

A children’s TV cartoon program, Captain Scarlet, is about an organization called Spectrum, whose purpose is to save the world from an evil extraterrestrial force called the Mysterons. Everyone in Spectrum has a color name—Captain Scarlet, Captain Blue, etc. The one Spectrum agent who has been mysteriously taken over by the Mysterons and works to advance their evil aims is Captain Black. The person who heads Spectrum, the good organization out to defend the world, is Colonel White.

Three of the dictionary definitions of white are “fairness of complexion, purity, innocence.” These definitions affect the standards of beauty in our culture, in which whiteness represents the norm. “Blondes have more fun” and “Wouldn’t you really rather be a blonde” are sexist in their attitudes toward women generally, but are racist white standards when applied to third world women. A 1971 Mademoiselle advertisement pictured a curly-headed, ivory-skinned woman over the caption, “When you go blonde go all the way,” and asked: “Isn’t this how, in the back of your mind, you always wanted to look? All wide-eyed and silky blonde down to there, and innocent?” Whatever the advertising people meant by this particular woman’s innocence, one must remember that “innocent” is one of the definitions of the word white. This standard of beauty when preached to all women is racist. The statement “Isn’t this how, in the back of your mind, you always wanted to look?” either ignores third world women or assumes they long to be white.

Time magazine in its coverage of the Wimbledon tennis competition between the black Australian Evonne Goolagong and the white American Chris Evert described Ms. Goolagong as “the dusky daughter of an Australian sheepsharer,” while Ms. Evert was “a fair young girl from the middle-class groves of Florida.” Dusky is a synonym of “black” and is defined as “having dark skin; of a dark color; gloomy; dark; swarthy.” Its antonyms are “fair” and “blonde.” Fair is defined in part as “free from blemish, imperfection, or anything that impairs the appearance, quality, or character; pleasing in appearance, attractive; clean; pretty; comely.” By defining Evonne Goolagong as “dusky,” Time technically defined her as the opposite of “pleasing in appearance; attractive; clean; pretty; comely.”

The studies of Kenneth B. Clark, Mary Ellen
Goodman, Judith Porter and others indicate that this persuasive “rightness of whiteness” in U.S. culture affects children before the age of four, providing white youngsters with a false sense of superiority and encouraging self-hatred among third world youngsters.

ETHNOCENTRISM OR FROM A WHITE PERSPECTIVE

Some words and phrases that are commonly used represent particular perspectives and frames of reference, and these often distort the understanding of the reader or listener. David R. Burgest has written about the effect of using the terms “slave” or “master.” He argues that the psychological impact of the statement referring to “the master raped his slave” is different from the impact of the same statement substituting the words: “the white captor raped an African woman held in captivity.”

Implicit in the English usage of the “master-slave” concept is ownership of the “slave” by the “master,” therefore, the “master” is merely abusing his property (slave). In reality, the captives (slave) were African individuals with human worth, right and dignity and the term “slave” denounces that human quality thereby making the mass rape of African women by white captors more acceptable in the minds of people and setting a mental frame of reference for legitimizing the atrocities perpetuated against African people.

The term “slave” connotes a less than human quality and turns the captive person into a thing. For example, two McGraw-Hill Far Eastern Publishers textbooks (1970) stated, “At first it was the slaves who worked the cane and they got only food for it. Now men work cane and get money.” Next time you write about slavery or read about it, try transposing all “slaves” into “African people held in captivity,” “Black people forced to work for no pay” or “African people stolen from their families and societies.” While it is more cumbersome, such phrasing conveys a different meaning.

PASSIVE TENSE

Another means by which language shapes our perspective has been noted by Thomas Greenfield, who writes that the achievements of Black people—and Black people themselves—have been hidden in

the linguistic ghetto of the passive voice, the subordinate clause, and the “understood” subject. The seemingly innocuous distinction (between active/passive voice) holds enormous implications for writers and speakers. When it is effectively applied, the rhetorical impact of the passive voice—the art of making the creator or instigator of action totally disappear from a reader’s perception—can be devastating.

For instance, some history texts will discuss how European immigrants came to the United States seeking a better life and expanded opportunities, but will note that “slaves were brought to America.” Not only does this omit the destruction of African societies and families, but it ignores the role of northern merchants and southern slaveholders in the profitable trade in human beings. Other books will state that “the continental railroad was built,” conveniently omitting information about the Chinese laborers who built much of it or the oppression they suffered.

Another example. While touring Monticello, Greenfield noted that the tour guide

made all the black people at Monticello disappear through her use of the passive voice. While speaking of the architectural achievements of Jefferson in the active voice, she unthinkingly shifted to passive when speaking of the work performed by Negro slaves and skilled servants.

Noting a type of door that after 166 years continued to operate without need for repair, Greenfield remarks that the design aspect of the door was much simpler than the actual skill and work involved in building and installing it. Yet his guide stated: “Mr. Jefferson designed these doors . . .” while “the doors were installed in 1809.” The workers who installed those doors were African people whom Jefferson held in bondage. The guide’s use of the passive tense enabled her to dismiss the reality of Jefferson’s slaveholding. It also meant that she did not have to make any mention of the skills of those people held in bondage.

POLITICS AND TERMINOLOGY

“Culturally deprived,” “economically disadvantaged” and “underdeveloped” are other terms which mislead and distort our awareness of reality. The application of the term “culturally deprived” and third world children in this society reflects a value judgment. It assumes that the dominant whites are cultured and all others without culture. In fact, third world children generally are bicultural, and many are bilingual, having grown up in their own culture as well as absorbing the dominant culture. In many ways,
they are equipped with skills and experiences which white youth have been deprived of, since most white youth develop in a monocultural, monolingual environment. Burgess suggests that the term “culturally deprived” be replaced by “culturally dispossessed,” and that the term “economically disadvantaged” be replaced by “economically exploited.” Both these terms present a perspective and implication that provide an entirely different frame of reference as to the reality of the third world experience in U.S. society.

Similarly, many nations of the third world are described as “underdeveloped.” These less wealthy nations are generally those that suffered under colonialism and neo-colonialism. The “developed” nations are those that exploited their resources and wealth. Therefore, rather than referring to these countries as “underdeveloped,” a more appropriate and meaningful designation might be “over exploited.” Again, transpose this term next time you hear about “underdeveloped nations” and note the different meaning that results.

Terms such as “culturally deprived,” “economically disadvantaged” and “underdeveloped” place the responsibility for their own conditions on those being so described. This is known as “Blaming the Victim.” It places responsibility for poverty on the victims of poverty. It removes the blame from those in power who benefit from, and continue to permit, poverty.

Still another example involves the use of “non-white,” “minority” or “third world.” While people of color are a minority in the U.S., they are part of the vast majority of the world’s population, in which white people are a distinct minority. Thus, by utilizing the term minority to describe people of color in the U.S., we can lose sight of the global majority/minority reality—a fact of some importance in the increasing and interconnected struggles of people of color inside and outside the U.S.

To describe people of color as “non-white” is to use whiteness as the standard and norm against which to measure all others. Use of the term “third world” to describe all people of color overcomes the inherent bias of “minority” and “non-white.” Moreover, it connects the struggles of third world people in the U.S. with the freedom struggles around the globe.

The term “third world” gained increasing usage after the 1955 Bandung Conference of “non-aligned” nations, which represented a third force outside of the two world superpowers. The “first world” represents the United States, Western Europe and their sphere of influence. The “second world” represents the Soviet Union and its sphere. The “third world” represents, for the most part, nations that were, or are, controlled by the “first world” or West. For the most part, these are nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

“LOADED” WORDS AND NATIVE AMERICANS

Many words lead to a demeaning characterization of groups of people. For instance, Columbus, it is said, “discovered” America. The word discover is defined as “to gain sight or knowledge of something previously unseen or unknown; to discover may be to find some existent thing that was previously unknown.” Thus, a continent inhabited by millions of human beings cannot be “discovered.” For history books to continue this usage represents a Eurocentric (white European) perspective on world history and ignores the existence of, and the perspective of, Native Americans. “Discovery,” as used in the Euro-American context, implies the right to take what one finds, ignoring the rights of those who already inhabit or own the “discovered” thing.

Eurocentrism is also apparent in the usage of “victory” and “massacre” to describe the battles between Native Americans and whites. Victory is defined in the dictionary as “a success or triumph over an enemy in battle or war; the decisive defeat of an opponent.” Conquest denotes the “taking over of control by the victor, and the obedience of the conquered.” Massacre is defined as “the unnecessary, indiscriminate killing of a number of human beings, as in barbarous warfare or persecution, or for revenge or plunder.” Defend is described as “to ward off attack from; guard against assault or injury; to strive to keep safe by resisting attack.”

Eurocentrism turns these definitions around to serve the purpose of distorting history and justifying Euro-American conquest of the Native American homelands. Euro-Americans are not described in history books as invading Native American lands, but rather as defending their homes against “Indian” attacks. Since European communities were constantly encroaching on land already occupied, then a more honest interpretation would state that it was the Native Americans who were “warding off,” “guarding” and “defending” their homelands.

Native American victories are invariably de-
fined as “massacres,” while the indiscriminate killing, extermination and plunder of Native American nations by Euro-Americans is defined as “victory.” Distortion of history by the choice of “loaded” words used to describe historical events is a common racist practice. Rather than portraying Native Americans as human beings in highly defined and complex societies, cultures and civilizations, history books use such adjectives as “savages,” “beasts,” “primitive,” and “backward.” Native people are referred to as “squaw,” “brave,” or “papoose” instead of “woman,” “man,” or “baby.”

Another term that has questionable connotations is tribe. The Oxford English Dictionary defines this noun as “a race of people; now applied especially to a primary aggregate of people in a primitive or barbarous condition, under a headman or chief.” Morton Fried, discussing “The Myth of Tribe,” states that the word “did not become a general term of reference to American Indian society until the nineteenth century. Previously, the words commonly used for Indian populations were ‘nation’ and ‘people.’” Since “tribe” has assumed a connotation of primitiveness or backwardness, it is suggested that the use of “nation” or “people” replace the term whenever possible in referring to Native American peoples.

The term tribe invokes even more negative implications when used in reference to American peoples. As Evelyn Jones Rich has noted, the term is “almost always used to refer to third world people and it implies a stage of development which is, in short, a put-down.”

“LOADED” WORDS AND AFRICANS

Conflicts among diverse peoples within African nations are often referred to as “tribal warfare,” while conflicts among the diverse peoples within European countries are never described in such terms. If the rivalries between the Ibo and the Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria are described as “tribal,” why not the rivalries between Serbs and Slavs in Yugoslavia, or Scots and English in Great Britain, Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, or the Basques and the Southern Spaniards in Spain? Conflicts among African peoples in a particular nation have religious, cultural, economic and/or political roots. If we can analyze the roots of conflicts among European peoples in terms other than “tribal warfare,” certainly we can do the same with African peoples, including correct reference to the ethnic groups or nations involved. For example, the terms “Kaffirs,” “Hottentot” or “Bushmen” are names imposed by white Europeans. The correct names are always those by which a people refer to themselves. (In these instances Xhosa, Khoi-Khoi and San are correct.)

The generalized application of “tribal” in reference to Africans—as well as the failure to acknowledge the religious, cultural and social diversity of African peoples—is a decidedly racist dynamic. It is part of the process whereby Euro-Americans justify, or avoid confronting, their oppression of third world peoples. Africa has been particularly insulted by this dynamic, as witness the pervasive “darkest Africa” image. This image, widespread in Western culture, evokes an Africa covered by jungles and inhabited by “uncivilized,” “cannibalistic,” “pagan,” “savage” peoples. This “darkest Africa” image avoids the geographical reality. Less than 20 percent of the African continent is wooded savanna, for example. The image also ignores the history of African cultures and civilizations. Ample evidence suggests this distortion of reality was developed as a convenient rationale for the European and American slave trade. The Western powers, rather than exploiting, were civilizing and christianizing “uncivilized” and “pagan savages” (so the rationalization went). This dynamic also served to justify Western colonialism. From Tarzan movies to racist children’s books like Doctor Dolittle and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, the image of “savage” Africa and the myth of “the white man’s burden” has been perpetuated in Western culture.

A 1972 Time magazine editorial lamenting the demise of Life magazine, stated that the “lavishness” of Life’s enterprises included “organizing safaris into darkest Africa.” The same year, the New York Times’ C. L. Sulzberger wrote that “Africa has a history as dark as the skins of many of its people.” Terms such as “darkest Africa,” “primitive,” “tribe” (“tribal”) or “jungle,” in reference to Africa, perpetuate myths and are especially inexcusable in such large circulation publications.

Ethnocentrism is similarly reflected in the term “pagan” to describe traditional religions. A February 1973 Time magazine article on Uganda stated, “Moslems account for only 500,000 of Uganda’s 10 million people. Of the remainder, 5,000,000 are Christians and the rest pagan.” Pagan is defined as “Heathen, a follower of a polytheistic religion; one that has little or no religion and that is marked by a frank delight in and
uninhibited seeking after sensual pleasures and material goods." The word is defined as "Unenlightened; an unconverted member of a people or nation that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible. A person whose culture or enlightenment is of an inferior grade, especially an irreligious person." Now, the people of Uganda, like almost all Africans, have serious religious beliefs and practices. As used by Westerners, "pagan" connotes something wild, primitive and inferior—another term to watch out for.

The variety of traditional structures that African people live in are their "houses," not "huts." A hut is "an often small and temporary dwelling of simple construction." And to describe Africans as "natives" (noun) is derogatory terminology—as in, "the natives are restless." The dictionary definition of native includes: "one of a people inhabiting a territorial area at the time of its discovery or becoming familiar to a foreigner; one belonging to a people having a less complex civilization." Therefore, use of "native," like use of "pagan" often implies a value judgment of white superiority.

QUALIFYING ADJECTIVES

Words that would normally have positive connotations can have entirely different meanings when used in a racist context. For example, C. L. Sulzberger, the columnist of the New York Times, wrote in January 1975, about conversations he had with two people in Namibia. One was the white South African administrator of the country and the other a member of SWAPO, the Namibian liberation movement. The first is described as "Dirk Mudge, who as senior elected member of the administration is a kind of acting Prime Minister...." But the second person is introduced as "Daniel Tijongarero, an intelligent Herero tribesman who is a member of SWAPO...." What need was there for Sulzberger to state that Daniel Tijongarero is "intelligent"? Why not also state that Dirk Mudge was "intelligent"—or do we assume he wasn't?

A similar example from a 1968 New York Times article reporting on an address by Lyndon Johnson stated, "The President spoke to the well-dressed Negro officials and their wives." In what similar circumstances can one imagine a reporter finding it necessary to note that an audience of white government officials was "well-dressed"?

Still another word often used in a racist context is "qualified." In the 1960s white Americans often questioned whether Black people were "qualified" to hold public office, a question that was never raised (until too late) about white officials like Wallace, Maddox, Nixon, Agnew, Mitchell, et al. The question of qualifications has been raised even more frequently in recent years as white people question whether Black people are "qualified" to be hired for positions in industry and educational institutions. "We're looking for a qualified Black" has been heard again and again as institutions are confronted with affirmative action goals. Why stipulate that Blacks must be "qualified," when for others it is taken for granted that applicants must be "qualified"?

SPEAKING ENGLISH

Finally, the depiction in movies and children's books of third world people speaking English is often itself racist. Children's books about Puerto Ricans or Chicanos often connect poverty with a failure to speak English or to speak it well, thus blaming the victim and ignoring the racism which affects third world people regardless of their proficiency in English. Asian characters speak a stilted English ("Honorable so and so" or "Confucius say") or have a speech impediment ("roots or ruck," "very solly," "fied lice"). Native American characters speak another variation of stilted English ("Boy not hide. Indian take boy"), repeat certain Hollywood-Indian phrases ("Heap big" and "Many moons") or simply grunt out "Ugh" or "How." The repeated use of these language characterizations functions to make third world people seem less intelligent and less capable than the English-speaking white characters.

WRAP-UP

A Saturday Review editorial on "The Environment of Language" stated that language

... has as much to do with the philosophical and political conditioning of a society as geography or climate... people in Western cultures do not realize the extent to which their racial attitudes have been conditioned since early childhood by the power of words to ennable or condemn, augment or detract, glorify or demean. Negative language infects the subconscious of most Western people from the time they first learn to speak. Prejudice is not merely imparted or superimposed. It is metabolized in the bloodstream of society. What is needed is not so much a change in language as an
awareness of the power of words to condition attitudes. If we can at least recognize the underpinnings of prejudice, we may be in a position to deal with the effects.

To recognize the racism in language is an important first step. Consciousness of the influence of language on our perceptions can help to negate much of that influence. But it is not enough to simply become aware of the effects of racism in conditioning attitudes. While we may not be able to change the language, we can definitely change our usage of the language. We can avoid using words that degrade people. We can make a conscious effort to use terminology that reflects a progressive perspective, as opposed to a distorting perspective. It is important for educators to provide students with opportunities to explore racism in language and to increase their awareness of it, as well as learning terminology that is positive and does not perpetuate negative human values.

NOTES


Also see:
The Glass Escalator
Hidden Advantages for Men in the “Female” Professions

Christine L. Williams

The sex segregation of the U.S. labor force is one of the most perplexing and tenacious problems in our society. Even though the proportion of men and women in the labor force is approaching parity (particularly for younger cohorts of workers) (U.S. Department of Labor 1991:18), men and women are still generally confined to predominantly single-sex occupations. Forty percent of men or women would have to change major occupational categories to achieve equal representation of men and women in all jobs (Reskin and Roos 1990:6), but even this figure underestimates the true degree of sex segregation. It is extremely rare to find specific jobs where equal numbers of men and women are engaged in the same activities in the same industries (Bielby and Baron 1984).

Most studies of sex segregation in the workforce have focused on women’s experiences in male-dominated occupations. Both researchers and advocates for social change have focused on the barriers faced by women who try to integrate predominantly male fields. Few have looked at the “flip-side” of occupational sex segregation: the exclusion of men from predominantly female occupations (exceptions include Schreiber 1979; Williams 1989; Zimmer 1988). But the fact is that men are less likely to enter female sex-typed occupations than women are to enter male-dominated jobs (Jacobs 1989). Reskin and Roos, for example, were able to identify 33 occupations in which female representation increased by more than nine percentage points between 1970 and 1980, but only three occupations in which the proportion of men increased as radically (1990: 20–21).

In this paper, I examine men’s underrepresentation in four predominantly female occupations—nursing, librarianship, elementary school teaching, and social work. Throughout the twentieth century, these occupations have been identified with “women’s work”—even though prior to the Civil War, men were more likely to be employed in these areas. These four occupations, often called the female “semi-professions” (Hodson and Sullivan 1990), today range from 5.5 percent male (in nursing) to 32 percent male (in social work). These percentages have not changed substantially in decades. In fact, two of these professions—librarianship and social work—have experienced declines in the proportions of men since 1975. Nursing is the only one of the four experiencing noticeable changes in sex composition, with the proportion of men increasing 80 percent between 1975 and 1990. Even so, men continue to be a tiny minority of all nurses.

METHODS

I conducted in-depth interviews with 76 men and 23 women in four occupations from 1985 to 1991. Interviews were conducted in four metropolitan
areas: San Francisco/Oakland, California; Austin, Texas; Boston, Massachusetts; and Phoenix, Arizona. These four areas were selected because they show considerable variation in the proportions of men in the four professions. For example, Austin has one of the highest percentages of men in nursing (7.7 percent), whereas Phoenix's percentage is one of the lowest (2.7 percent) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980). The sample was generated using "snowballing" techniques. Women were included in the sample to gauge their feelings and responses to men who enter "their" professions.

DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING

Contrary to the experience of many women in the male-dominated professions, many of the men and women I spoke to indicated that there is a preference for hiring men in these occupations. A Texas librarian at a junior high school said that his school district "would hire a male over a female."

I: Why do you think that is?
R: Because there are so few, and the . . . ones that they do have, the library directors seem to really . . . think they're doing great jobs. I don't know, maybe they just feel they're being progressive or something. [but] I have had a real sense that they really appreciate having a male, particularly at the junior high. . . . As I said, when seven of us lost our jobs from the high schools and were redistributed, there were only four positions at junior high, and I got one of them. Three of the librarians, some who had been here longer than I had with the school district, were put down in elementary schools as librarians. And I definitely think that being male made a difference in my being moved to the junior high rather than an elementary school.

Many of the men perceived their token status as males in predominantly female occupations as an advantage in hiring and promotions. I asked an Arizona teacher whether his specialty (elementary special education) was an unusual area for men compared to other areas within education. He said,

Much more so. I am extremely marketable in special education.
That's not why I got into the field. But I am extremely marketable because I am a man.

In several cases, the more female-dominated the specialty, the greater the apparent preference for men. For example, when asked if he encountered any problem getting a job in pediatrics, a Massachusetts nurse said,

No, no, none. . . . I've heard this from managers and supervisory-type people with men in pediatrics: "It's nice to have a man because it's such a female-dominated profession."

However, there were some exceptions to this preference for men in the most female-dominated specialties. In some cases, formal policies actually barred men from certain jobs. This was the case in some rural Texas school districts, which refused to hire men in the youngest grades (K-3). Some nurses also reported being excluded from positions in obstetrics and gynecology wards, a policy encountered more frequently in private Catholic hospitals.

But often the pressures keeping men out of certain specialties were more subtle than this. Some men described being "tracked" into practice areas
within their professions which were considered more legitimate for men. For example, one Texas man described how he was pushed into administration and planning in social work, even though “I’m not interested in writing policy; I’m much more interested in research and clinical stuff.” A nurse who is interested in pursuing graduate study in family and child health in Boston said he was dissuaded from entering the program specialty in favor of a concentration in “adult nursing.” A kindergarten teacher described the difficulty of finding a job in his specialty after graduation: “I was recruited immediately to start getting into a track to become an administrator. And it was men who recruited me. It was men that ran the system at that time, especially in Los Angeles.”

This tracking may bar men from the most female-identified specialties within these professions. But men are effectively being “kicked upstairs” in the process. Those specialties considered more legitimate practice areas for men also tend to be the most prestigious, better paying ones. A distinguished kindergarten teacher, who had been voted citywide “Teacher of the Year,” told me that even though people were pleased to see him in the classroom, “there’s been some encouragement to think about administration, and there’s been some encouragement to think about teaching at the university level or something like that, or supervisory-type position.” That is, despite his aptitude and interest in staying in the classroom, he felt pushed in the direction of administration.

The effect of this “tracking” is the opposite of that experienced by women in male-dominated occupations. Researchers have reported that many women encounter a “glass ceiling” in their efforts to scale organizational and professional hierarchies. That is, they are constrained by invisible barriers to promotion in their careers, caused mainly by sexist attitudes of men in the highest positions (Freeman 1990). In contrast to the “glass ceiling,” many of the men I interviewed seem to encounter a “glass escalator.” Often, despite their intentions, they face invisible pressures to move up in their professions. As if on a moving escalator, they must work to stay in place.

A public librarian specializing in children’s collections (a heavily female-dominated concentration) described an encounter with this “escalator” in his very first job out of library school. In his first six-months’ evaluation, his supervisors commended him for his good work in storytelling and related activities, but they criticized him for “not shooting high enough.”

Seriously. That’s literally what they were telling me. They assumed that because I was a male—and they told me this—and that I was being hired right out of graduate school, that somehow I wasn’t doing the kind of management-oriented work that they thought I should be doing. And as a result, really they had a lot of bad marks, as it were, against me on my evaluation. And I said I couldn’t believe this!

Throughout his 10-year career, he had had to struggle to remain in children’s collections.

The glass escalator does not operate at all levels. In particular, men in academia reported some gender-based discrimination in the highest positions due to their universities’ commitment to affirmative action. Two nursing professors reported that they felt their own chances of promotion to deanships were nil because their universities viewed the position of nursing dean as a guaranteed female appointment in an otherwise heavily male-dominated administration. One California social work professor reported his university canceled its search for a dean because no minority male or female candidates had been placed on their short list. It was rumored that other schools on cam-
pus were permitted to go forward with their searches—even though they also failed to put forward names of minority candidates—because the higher administration perceived it to be “easier” to fulfill affirmative action goals in the social work school. The interviews provide greater evidence of the “glass elevator” at work in the lower levels of these professions.

Of course, men’s motivations also play a role in their advancement to higher professional positions. I do not mean to suggest that the men I talked to all resented the informal tracking they experienced. For many men, leaving the most female-identified areas of their professions helped them resolve internal conflicts involving their masculinity. One man left his job as a school social worker to work in a methadone drug treatment program, not because he was encouraged to leave by his colleagues, but because “I think there was some macho shit there, to tell you the truth, because I remember feeling a little uncomfortable there . . .; it didn’t feel right to me.” Another social worker, employed in the mental health services department of a large urban area in California, reflected on his move into administration:

The more I think about it, through our discussion, I’m sure that’s a large part of why I wound up in administration. It’s okay for a man to do the administration. In fact, I don’t know if I fully answered a question that you asked a little while ago about how did being male contribute to my advancing in the field. I was saying it wasn’t because I got any special favoritism as a man, but . . . I think . . . because I’m a man, I felt a need to get into this kind of position. I may have worked harder toward it, may have competed harder for it, than most women would do, even women who think about doing administrative work.

Elsewhere I have speculated on the origins of men’s tendency to define masculinity through single-sex work environments (Williams 1989). Clearly, personal ambition does play a role in accounting for men’s movement into more “male-defined” arenas within these professions. But these occupations also structure opportunities for males independent of their individual desires or motives.

The interviews suggest that men’s underrepresentation in these professions cannot be attributed to discrimination in hiring or promotions. Many of the men indicated that they received preferential treatment because they were men. Although men mentioned gender discrimination in the hiring process, for the most part they were channeled into the more “masculine” specialties within these professions, which ironically meant being “tracked” into better-paying and more prestigious specialties.

SUPERVISORS AND COLLEAGUES: THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Researchers claim that subtle forms of workplace discrimination push women out of male-dominated occupations (Jacobs 1989; Reskin and Hartmann 1986). In particular, women report feeling excluded from informal leadership and decision-making networks, and they sense hostility from their male co-workers, which makes them feel uncomfortable and unwanted (Carothers and Crull 1984). Respondents in this study were asked about their relationships with supervisors and female colleagues to ascertain whether men also experienced “poisoned” work environments when entering gender atypical occupations.
A major difference in the experience of men and women in nontraditional occupations is that men in these situations are far more likely to be supervised by a member of their own sex. In each of the four professions I studied, men are overrepresented in administrative and managerial capacities, or, as is the case of nursing, their positions in the organizational hierarchy are governed by men (Grimm and Stern 1974; Phenix 1987; Schmuck 1987; Williams 1989; York, Henley and Gamble 1987). Thus, unlike women who enter “male fields,” the men in these professions often work under the direct supervision of other men.

Many of the men interviewed reported that they had good rapport with their male supervisors. Even in professional school, some men reported extremely close relationships with their male professors. For example, a Texas librarian described an unusually intimate association with two male professors in graduate school:

I can remember a lot of times in the classroom there would be discussions about a particular topic or issue, and the conversation would spill over into their office hours, after the class was over. And even though there were . . . a couple of the other women that had been in on the discussion, they weren’t there. And I don’t know if that was preferential or not . . . it certainly carried over into personal life as well. Not just at the school and that sort of thing. I mean, we would get together for dinner . . .

Other men reported similar closeness with their professors. A Texas psychotherapist recalled his relationships with his male professors in social work school:

I made it a point to make a golfing buddy with one of the guys that was in administration. He and I played golf a lot. He was the guy who kind of ran the research training, the research part of the master’s program. Then there was a sociologist who ran the other part of the research program. He and I developed a good friendship.

This close mentoring by male professors contrasts with the reported experience of women in nontraditional occupations. Others have noted a lack of solidarity among women in nontraditional occupations. Writing about military academies, for example, Yoder describes the failure of token women to mentor succeeding generations of female cadets. She argues that women attempt to play down their gender difference from men because it is the source of scorn and derision.

Because women felt unacceptable by their male colleagues, one of the last things they wanted to do was to emphasize their gender. Some women thought that, if they kept company with other women, this would highlight their gender and would further isolate them from male cadets. These women desperately wanted to be accepted as cadets, not as women cadets. Therefore, they did everything from not wearing skirts as an option with their uniforms to avoiding being a part of a group of women. (Yoder 1989:532)

Men in nontraditional occupations face a different scenario—their gender is construed as a positive difference. Therefore, they have an incentive to bond together and emphasize their distinctiveness from the female majority.
Openly gay men may encounter less favorable treatment at the hands of their supervisors. For example, a nurse in Texas stated that one of the physicians he worked with preferred to staff the operating room with male nurses exclusively—as long as they weren't gay. Stigma associated with homosexuality leads some men to enhance, or even exaggerate their "masculine" qualities, and may be another factor pushing men into more "acceptable" specialties for men.

Not all men who work in these occupations are supervised by men. Many of the men interviewed who had female bosses also reported high levels of acceptance—even though levels of intimacy with women seemed lower than with other men. In some cases, however, men reported feeling shut out from decision making when the higher administration was constituted entirely by women. I asked an Arizona librarian whether men in the library profession were discriminated against in hiring because of their sex:

Professionally speaking, people go to considerable lengths to keep that kind of thing out of their [hiring] deliberations. Personally, it's another matter. It's pretty common around here to talk about the "old girl network." This is one of the few libraries that I've had any intimate knowledge of which is actually controlled by women. . . . Most of the department heads and upper-level administrators are women. And there's an "old girl network" that works just like the "old boy network," except that the important conferences take place in the women's room rather than on the golf course. But the political mechanism is the same, the exclusion of the other sex from decision making is the same. The reasons are the same. It's somewhat discouraging . . .

Although I did not interview many supervisors, I did include 23 women in my sample to ascertain their perspectives about the presence of men in their professions. All of the women I interviewed claimed to be supportive of their male colleagues, but some conveyed ambivalence. For example, a social work professor said she would like to see more men enter the social work profession, particularly in the clinical specialty (where they are underrepresented). Indeed, she favored affirmative action hiring guidelines for men in the profession. Yet, she resented the fact that her department hired "another white male" during a recent search.

Even outside work, most of the men interviewed said they felt fully accepted by their female colleagues. They were usually included in informal socialization occasions with the women—even though this frequently meant attending baby showers or Tupperware parties. Many said that they declined offers to attend these events because they were not interested in "women's things," although several others claimed to attend everything. The minority men I interviewed seemed to feel the least comfortable in these informal contexts. One social worker in Arizona was asked about socializing with his female colleagues:

I: So in general, for example, if all the employees were going to get together to have a party, or celebrate a bridal shower or whatever, would you be invited along with the rest of the group?

R: They would invite me, I would say, somewhat reluctantly. Being a black male, working with all white females, it did cause some outside problems. So I didn't go to a lot of functions with them . . .

I: You felt that there was some tension there on the level of your acceptance . . .?
R: Yeah. It was OK working, but on the outside, personally, there was some tension there. It never came out, that they said, "Because of who you are we can’t invite you" (laughs), and I wouldn’t have done anything anyway. I would have probably respected them more for saying what was on their minds. But I never felt completely in with the group.

Some single men also said they felt uncomfortable socializing with married female colleagues because it gave the "wrong impression." But in general, the men said that they felt very comfortable around their colleagues and described their work places as very congenial for men. It appears unlikely, therefore, that men’s underrepresentation in these professions is due to hostility toward men on the part of supervisors or women workers.

**DISCRIMINATION FROM "OUTSIDERS"**

The most compelling evidence of discrimination against men in these professions is related to their dealings with the public. Men often encounter negative stereotypes when they come into contact with clients or "outsiders"—people they meet outside of work. For instance, it is popularly assumed that male nurses are gay. Librarians encounter images of themselves as "wimpy" and asexual. Male social workers describe being typecast as "feminine" and "passive." Elementary school teachers are often confronted by suspicions that they are pedophiles. One kindergarten teacher described an experience that occurred early in his career, which was related to him years afterward by his principal:

He indicated to me that parents had come to him and indicated to him that they had a problem with the fact that I was a male. . . . I recall almost exactly what he said. There were three specific concerns that the parents had: One parent said, "How can he love my child; he’s a man." The second thing that I recall, he said the parent said, "He has a beard." And the third thing was, "Aren’t you concerned about homosexuality?"

Such suspicions often cause men in all four professions to alter their work behavior to guard against sexual abuse charges, particularly in those specialties requiring intimate contact with women and children.

Men are very distressed by these negative stereotypes, which tend to undermine their self-esteem and to cause them to second-guess their motivations for entering these fields. A California teacher said,

If I tell men that I don’t know, that I’m meeting for the first time, that that’s what I do, . . . sometimes there’s a look on their faces that, you know, “Oh, couldn’t get a real job?”

When asked if his wife, who is also an elementary school teacher, encounters the same kind of prejudice, he said,

No, it’s accepted because she’s a woman. . . . I think people would see that as a . . . step up, you know. "Oh you’re not a housewife; you’ve got a career. That’s great . . . that you’re out there working. And you have a daughter, but you’re still out there working. You decided not to stay home, and you went out there and got a job." Whereas for me, it’s more like I’m supposed to be out working anyway, even though I’d rather be home with [my daughter].
Unlike women who enter traditionally male professions, men's movement into these jobs is perceived by the "outside world" as a step down in status. This particular form of discrimination may be most significant in explaining why men are underrepresented in these professions. Men who otherwise might show interest in and aptitudes for such careers are probably discouraged from pursuing them because of the negative popular stereotypes associated with the men who work in them. This is a crucial difference from the experience of women in nontraditional professions: "My daughter, the physician," resonates far more favorably in most people's ears than "my son, the nurse."

Many of the men in my sample identified the stigma of working in a female-identified occupation as the major barrier to more men entering their professions. However, for the most part, they claimed that these negative stereotypes were not a factor in their own decisions to join these occupations. Most respondents didn't consider entering these fields until well into adulthood, after working in some related occupation. Several social workers and librarians even claimed they were not aware that men were a minority in their chosen professions. Either they had no well-defined image or stereotype, or their contacts and mentors were predominantly men. For example, prior to entering library school, many librarians held part-time jobs in university libraries, where there are proportionally more men than in the profession generally. Nurses and elementary school teachers were more aware that mostly women worked in these jobs, and this was often a matter of some concern to them. However, their choices were ultimately legitimized by mentors, or by encouraging friends or family members who implicitly reassured them that entering these occupations would not typecast them as feminine. In some cases, men were told by recruiters there were special advancement opportunities for men in these fields, and they entered them expecting rapid promotion to administrative positions.

I: Did it ever concern you when you were making the decision to enter nursing school, the fact that it is a female-dominated profession?

R: Not really. I never saw myself working on the floor. I saw myself pretty much going into administration, just getting the background and then getting a job someplace as a supervisor and then working, getting up into administration.

Because of the unique circumstances of their recruitment, many of the respondents did not view their occupational choices as inconsistent with a male gender role, and they generally avoided the negative stereotypes directed against men in these fields.

Indeed, many of the men I interviewed claimed that they did not encounter negative professional stereotypes until they had worked in these fields for several years. Popular prejudices can be damaging to self-esteem and probably push some men out of these professions altogether. Yet, ironically, they sometimes contribute to the "glass escalator" effect I have been describing. Men seem to encounter the most vituperative criticism from the public when they are in the most female-identified specialties. Public concerns sometimes result in their being shunted into more "legitimate" positions for men. A librarian formerly in charge of a branch library's children's collection, who now works in the reference department of the city's main library, describes his experience:

R: Some of the people [who frequented the branch library] complained that they didn't want to have a man doing the storytelling scenario. And I got transferred here to the central library in an equivalent
job... I thought that I did a good job. And I had been told by my supervisor that I was doing a good job.

I: Have you ever considered filing some sort of lawsuit to get that other job back?

R: Well, actually, the job I’ve gotten now... well, it’s a reference librarian; it’s what I wanted in the first place. I’ve got a whole lot more authority here. I’m also in charge of the circulation desk. And I’ve recently been promoted because of my new stature, so... no, I’m not considering trying to get that other job back.

The negative stereotypes about men who do “women’s work” can push men out of specific jobs. However, to the extent that they channel men into more “legitimate” practice areas, their effects can actually be positive. Instead of being a source of discrimination, these prejudices can add to the “glass escalator effect” by pressuring men to move out of the most female-identified areas, and up to those regarded more legitimate and prestigious for men.

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REFERENCES


Masculinity as Homophobia
Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity

Michael S. Kimmel

"Funny thing," [Curley's wife] said. "If I catch any one man, and he's alone, I get along fine with him. But just let two of the guys get together an' you won't talk. Jus' nothin' but mad." She dropped her fingers and put her hands on her hips. "You're all scared of each other, that's what. Ever' one of you's scared the rest is goin' to get something on you."

JOHN STEINBECK
OF MICE AND MEN (1937)

We think of manhood as eternal, a timeless essence that resides deep in the heart of every man. We think of manhood as a thing, a quality that one either has or doesn't have. We think of manhood as innate, residing in the particular biological composition of the human male, the result of androgens or the possession of a penis. We think of manhood as a transcendent tangible property that each man must manifest in the world, the reward presented with great ceremony to a young novice by his elders for having successfully completed an arduous initiation ritual. In the words of poet Robert Bly (1990), "the structure at the bottom of the male psyche is still as firm as it was twenty thousand years ago" (p. 230).

In this chapter, I view masculinity as a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world. Manhood is neither static nor timeless; it is historical. Manhood is not the manifestation of an inner essence; it is socially constructed. Manhood does not bubble up to consciousness from our biological makeup; it is created in culture. Manhood means different things at different times to different people. We come to know what it means to be a man in our culture by setting our definitions in opposition to a set of "others"—racial minorities, sexual minorities, and, above all, women.

Our definitions of manhood are constantly changing, being played out on the political and social terrain on which the relationships between women and men are played out. In fact, the search for the transcendent, timeless definition of manhood is itself a sociological phenomenon—we tend to search for the timeless and eternal during moments of crisis, those points of transition when old definitions no longer work and new definitions are yet to be firmly established.

This idea that manhood is socially constructed and historically shifting should not be understood as a loss, that something is being taken away from men. In fact, it gives us something extraordinarily valuable—agency, the capacity to act. It gives us a sense of historical possibilities to replace the despondent resignation that invariably attends timeless, ahistorical essentialisms. Our behaviors are not simply "just human nature," because "boys will be boys." From the materials we find around us in our culture—other people, ideas, objects—we actively create our worlds, our identities. Men, both individually and collectively, can change.
In this chapter, I explore this social and historical construction of both hegemonic masculinity and alternate masculinities, with an eye toward offering a new theoretical model of American manhood. To accomplish this I first uncover some of the hidden gender meanings in classical statements of social and political philosophy, so that I can anchor the emergence of contemporary manhood in specific historical and social contexts. I then spell out the ways in which this version of masculinity emerged in the United States, by tracing both psychoanalytic developmental sequences and a historical trajectory in the development of marketplace relationships.

MASCUrLINITY AS HISTORY AND THE HISTORY OF MASCULINITY

The idea of masculinity . . . is the product of historical shifts in the grounds on which men rooted their sense of themselves as men. To argue that cultural definitions of gender identity are historically specific goes only so far; we have to specify exactly what those models were. In my historical inquiry into the development of these models for manhood I chart the fate of two models for manhood at the turn of the 19th century and the emergence of a third in the first few decades of that century.

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, two models of manhood prevailed. The Gentle Patriot derived his identity from landownership. Supervising his estate, he was refined, elegant, and given to casual sensuousness. He was a doting and devoted father, who spent much of his time supervising the estate and with his family. Think of George Washington or Thomas Jefferson as examples. By contrast, the Heroic Artisan embodied the physical strength and republican virtue that Jefferson observed in the yeoman farmer, independent urban craftsman, or shopkeeper. Also a devoted father, the Heroic Artisan taught his son his craft, bringing him through ritual apprenticeship to status as master craftsman. Economically autonomous, the Heroic Artisan also cherished his democratic community, delighting in the participatory democracy of the town meeting. Think of Paul Revere at his pewter shop, shirt-sleeves rolled up, a leather apron—a man who took pride in his work.

Heroic Artisans and Gentle Patriarchs lived in casual accord, in part because their gender ideals were complementary (both supported participatory democracy and individual autonomy, although patriarchs tended to support more powerful state machineries and also supported slavery) and because they rarely saw one another: Artisans were decidedly urban and the Gentle Patriarchs ruled their rural estates. By the 1830s, though, this casual symbiosis was shattered by the emergence of a new vision of masculinity, Marketplace Manhood.

Marketplace Man derived his identity entirely from his success in the capitalist marketplace, as he accumulated wealth, power, status. He was the urban entrepreneur, the businessman. Restless, agitated, and anxious, Marketplace Man was an absentee landlord at home and an absent father with his children, devoting himself to his work in an increasingly homosocial environment—a male-only world in which he pits himself against other men. His efforts at self-making transform the political and economic spheres, casting aside the Gentle Patriot as an anachronistic feminized dandy—sweet, but ineffective and outmoded, and transforming the Heroic Artisan into a dispossessed proletarian, a wage slave.

As Tocqueville would have seen it, the coexistence of the Gentle Patriot and the Heroic Artisan embodied the fusion of liberty and equality. Gentle Patriarchy was the manhood of the traditional aristocracy, the class that embodied the virtue of liberty. The Heroic Artisan embodied democratic community,
the solidarity of the urban shopkeeper or craftsman. Liberty and democracy, the patriarch and the artisan, could, and did, coexist. But Marketplace Man is capitalist man, and he makes both freedom and equality problematic, eliminating the freedom of the aristocracy and proletarianizing the equality of the artisan. In one sense, American history has been an effort to restore, retrieve, or reconstitute the virtues of Gentle Patriarchy and Heroic Artisanate as they were being transformed in the capitalist marketplace.

Marketplace Manhood was a manhood that required proof, and that required the acquisition of tangible goods as evidence of success. It reconstituted itself by the exclusion of “others”—women, nonwhite men, nonnative-born men, homosexual men—and by terrified flight into a pristine mythic homosocial Eden where men could, at last, be real men among other men. The story of the ways in which Marketplace Man becomes American Everyday is a tragic tale, a tale of striving to live up to impossible ideals of success leading to chronic terrors of emasculation, emotional emptiness, and a gendered rage that leave a wide swath of destruction in [their] wake.

MASCULINITIES AS POWER RELATIONS

Marketplace Masculinity describes the normative definition of American masculinity. It describes his characteristics—aggression, competition, anxiety—and the arena in which those characteristics are deployed—the public sphere, the marketplace. If the marketplace is the arena in which manhood is tested and proved, it is a gendered arena, in which tensions between women and men and tensions among different groups of men are weighted with meaning. These tensions suggest that cultural definitions of gender are played out in a contested terrain and are themselves power relations.

All masculinities are not created equal; or rather, we are all created equal, but any hypothetical equality evaporates quickly because our definitions of masculinity are not equally valued in our society. One definition of manhood continues to remain the standard against which other forms of manhood are measured and evaluated. Within the dominant culture, the masculinity that defines white, middle class, early middle-aged, heterosexual men is the masculinity that sets the standards for other men, against which other men are measured and, more often than not, found wanting. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) wrote that in America, there is only “one complete, unblushing male”:

a young, married, white, urban, northern heterosexual, Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight and height, and a recent record in sports. Every American male tends to look out upon the world from this perspective... Any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself... as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior. (p. 128)

This is the definition that we will call “hegemonic” masculinity, the image of masculinity of those men who hold power, which has become the standard in psychological evaluations, sociological research, and self-help and advice literature for teaching young men to become “real men” (Connell, 1987). The hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power. We equate manhood with being strong, successful, capable, reliable, in control. The very definitions of manhood we have developed in our culture maintain the power that some men have over other men and that men have over women.

Our culture’s definition of masculinity is thus several stories at once. It is about the individual man’s quest to accumulate those cultural symbols that
denote manhood, signs that he has in fact achieved it. It is about those standards being used against women to prevent their inclusion in public life and their consignment to a devalued private sphere. It is about the differential access that different types of men have to those cultural resources that confer manhood and about how each of these groups then develop their own modifications to preserve and claim their manhood. It is about the power of these definitions themselves to serve to maintain the real-life power that men have over women and that some men have over other men.

This definition of manhood has been summarized cleverly by psychologist Robert Brannon (1976) into four succinct phrases:

1. “No Sissy Stuff!” One may never do anything that even remotely suggests femininity. Masculinity is the relentless repudiation of the feminine.
2. “Be a Big Wheel.” Masculinity is measured by power, success, wealth, and status. As the current saying goes, “He who has the most toys when he dies wins.”
3. “Be a Sturdy Oak.” Masculinity depends on remaining calm and reliable in a crisis, holding emotions in check. In fact, proving you’re a man depends on never showing your emotions at all. Boys don’t cry.

These rules contain the elements of the definition against which virtually all American men are measured. Failure to embody these rules, to affirm the power of the rules and one’s achievement of them is a source of men’s confusion and pain. Such a model is, of course, unrealizable for any man. But we keep trying, valiantly and vainly, to measure up. American masculinity is a relentless test. The chief test is contained in the first rule. Whatever the variations by race, class, age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, being a man means “not being like women.” This notion of anti-femininity lies at the heart of contemporary and historical conceptions of manhood, so that masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than who one is.

**MASculinity AS THE FlIGHT FROM THE FEMININE**

Historically and developmentally, masculinity has been defined as the flight from women, the repudiation of femininity. Since Freud, we have come to understand that developmentally the central task that every little boy must confront is to develop a secure identity for himself as a man. As Freud had it, the oedipal project is a process of the boy’s renouncing his identification with and deep emotional attachment to his mother and then replacing her with the father as the object of identification. Notice that he reidentifies but never reattaches. This entire process, Freud argued, is set in motion by the boy’s sexual desire for his mother. But the father stands in the son’s path and will not yield his sexual property to his puny son. The boy’s first emotional experience, then, the one that inevitably follows his experience of desire, is fear—fear of the bigger, stronger, more sexually powerful father. It is this fear, experienced symbolically as the fear of castration, Freud argues, that forces the young boy to renounce his identification with mother and seek to identify with the being who is the actual source of his fear, his father. In so doing, the boy is now symbolically capable of sexual union with a motherlike substitute, that is, a woman. The boy becomes gendered (masculine) and heterosexual at the same time.

Masculinity, in this model, is irrevocably tied to sexuality. The boy’s sexuality will now come to resemble the sexuality of his father (or at least the
way he imagines his father)—menacing, predatory, possessive, and possibly punitive. The boy has come to identify with his oppressor; now he can become the oppressor himself. But a terror remains, the terror that the young man will be unmasked as a fraud, as a man who has not completely and irrevocably separated from mother. It will be other men who will do the unmasking. Failure will de-sex the man, make him appear as not fully a man. He will be seen as a wimp, a Mama’s boy, a sissy.

After pulling away from his mother, the boy comes to see her not as a source of nurturance and love, but as an insatiably infantilizing creature, capable of humiliating him in front of his peers. She makes him dress up in uncomfortable and itchy clothing, her kisses smear his cheeks with lipstick, staining his boyish innocence with the mark of feminine dependency. No wonder so many boys cringe from their mothers’ embraces with groans of “Aw, Mom! Quit it!” Mothers represent the humiliation of infancy, helplessness, dependency. “Men act as though they were being guided by (or rebelling against) rules and prohibitions enunciated by a moral mother,” writes psychohistorian Geoffrey Gorer (1964). As a result, “all the niceties of masculine behavior—modesty, politeness, neatness, cleanliness—come to be regarded as concessions to feminine demands, and not good in themselves as part of the behavior of a proper man” (pp. 56, 57).

The flight from femininity is angry and frightened, because mother can so easily emasculate the young boy by her power to render him dependent, or at least to remind him of dependency. It is relentless; manhood becomes a lifelong quest to demonstrate its achievement, as if to prove the unprovable to others, because we feel so unsure of it ourselves. Women don’t often feel compelled to “prove their womanhood”—the phrase itself sounds ridiculous. Women have different kinds of gender identity crises; their anger and frustration, and their own symptoms of depression, come more from being excluded than from questioning whether they are feminine enough.4

The drive to repudiate the mother as the indication of the acquisition of masculine gender identity has three consequences for the young boy. First, he pushes away his real mother, and with her the traits of nurturance, compassion, and tenderness she may have embodied. Second, he suppresses those traits in himself, because they will reveal his incomplete separation from mother. His life becomes a lifelong project to demonstrate that he possesses none of his mother’s traits. Masculine identity is born in the renunciation of the feminine, not in the direct affirmation of the masculine, which leaves masculine gender identity tenuous and fragile.

Third, as if to demonstrate the accomplishment of these first two tasks, the boy also learns to devalue all women in his society, as the living embodiments of those traits in himself he has learned to despise. Whether or not he was aware of it, Freud also described the origins of sexism—the systematic devaluation of women—in the desperate efforts of the boy to separate from mother. We may want “a girl just like the girl that married dear old Dad,” as the popular song had it, but we certainly don’t want to be like her.

This chronic uncertainty about gender identity helps us understand several obsessive behaviors. Take, for example, the continuing problem of the school-yard bully. Parents remind us that the bully is the least secure about his manhood, and so he is constantly trying to prove it. But he “proves” it by choosing opponents he is absolutely certain he can defeat; thus the standard taunt to a bully is to “pick on someone your own size.” He can’t, though, and after defeating a smaller and weaker opponent, which he was sure would prove his manhood, he is left with the empty gnawing feeling that he has not proved it after all, and he must find another opponent, again one smaller and weaker, that he can again defeat to prove it to himself.5
One of the more graphic illustrations of this lifelong quest to prove one’s manhood occurred at the Academy Awards presentation in 1992. As aging, tough guy actor Jack Palance accepted the award for best supporting actor for his role in the cowboy comedy City Slickers, he commented that people, especially film producers, think that because he is 71 years old, he’s all washed up, that he’s no longer competent. “Can we take a risk on this guy?” he quoted them as saying, before he dropped to the floor to do a set of one-armed push-ups. It was pathetic to see such an accomplished actor still having to prove that he is virile enough to work and, as he also commented at the podium, to have sex.

When does it end? Never. To admit weakness, to admit frailty or fragility, is to be seen as a wimp, a sissy, not a real man. But seen by whom?

MASCULINITY AS A HOMOSOCIAL ENACTMENT

Other men: We are under the constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us, rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men’s approval. It is other men who evaluate the performance. Literary critic David Leverenz (1991) argues that “ideologies of manhood have functioned primarily in relation to the gaze of male peers and male authority” (p. 769). Think of how men boast to one another of their accomplishments—from their latest sexual conquest to the size of the fish they caught—and how we constantly parade the markers of manhood—wealth, power, status, sexy women—in front of other men, desperate for their approval.

That men prove their manhood in the eyes of other men is both a consequence of sexism and one of its chief props. “Women have, in men’s minds, such a low place on the social ladder of this country that it’s useless to define yourself in terms of a woman,” noted playwright David Mamet. “What men need is men’s approval.” Women become a kind of currency that men use to improve their ranking on the masculine social scale. (Even those moments of heroic conquest of women carry, I believe, a current of homosocial evaluation.) Masculinity is a homosocial enactment. We test ourselves, perform heroic feats, take enormous risks, all because we want other men to grant us our manhood.

Masculinity as a homosocial enactment is fraught with danger, with the risk of failure, and with intense relentless competition. “Every man you meet has a rating or an estimate of himself which he never loses or forgets,” wrote Kenneth Wayne (1912) in his popular turn-of-the-century advice book. “A man has his own rating, and instantly he lays it alongside of the other man” (p. 18). Almost a century later, another man remarked to psychologist Sam Osherson (1992) that “[b]y the time you’re an adult, it’s easy to think you’re always in competition with men, for the attention of women, in sports; at work” (p. 291).

MASCULINITY AS HOMOPHOBIA

If masculinity is a homosocial enactment, its overriding emotion is fear. In the Freudian model, the fear of the father’s power terrifies the young boy to renounce his desire for his mother and identify with his father. This model links gender identity with sexual orientation: The little boy’s identification with father (becoming masculine) allows him to now engage in sexual relations with women (he becomes heterosexual). This is the origin of how we can “read” one’s sexual orientation through the successful performance of gender identity. Second, the fear that the little boy feels does not send him scurrying into
the arms of his mother to protect him from his father. Rather, he believes he will overcome his fear by identifying with its source. We become masculine by identifying with our oppressor.

But there is a piece of the puzzle missing, a piece that Freud, himself, implied but did not follow up. If the pre-oedipal boy identifies with mother, he sees the world through mother's eyes. Thus, when he confronts father during his great oedipal crisis, he experiences a split vision: He sees his father as his mother sees his father, with a combination of awe, wonder, terror, and desire. He simultaneously sees the father as he, the boy, would like to see him—as the object not of desire but of emulation. Repudiating mother and identifying with father only partially answer his dilemma. What is he to do with that homoerotic desire, the desire he felt because he saw father the way that his mother saw father?

He must suppress it. Homoerotic desire is cast as feminine desire, desire for other men. Homophobia is the effort to suppress that desire, to purify all relationships with other men, with women, with children of its taint, and to ensure that no one could possibly ever mistake one for a homosexual. Homophobic flight from intimacy with other men is the repudiation of the homosexual within—never completely successful and hence constantly reenacted in every homosocial relationship. "The lives of most American men are bounded, and their interests daily curtailed by the constant necessity to prove to their fellows, and to themselves, that they are not sissies, not homosexuals," writes psychoanalytic historian Geoffrey Gorer (1964). "An interest or pursuit which is identified as a feminine interest or pursuit becomes deeply suspect for men" (p. 129).

Even if we do not subscribe to Freudian psychoanalytic ideas, we can still observe how, in less sexualized terms, the father is the first man who evaluates the boy's masculine performance, the first pair of male eyes before whom he tries to prove himself. Those eyes will follow him for the rest of his life. Other men's eyes will join them—the eyes of role models such as teachers, coaches, bosses, or media heroes; the eyes of his peers, his friends, his workmates; and the eyes of millions of other men, living and dead, from whose constant scrutiny of his performance he will never be free. "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living," was how Karl Marx put it over a century ago (1848/1964, p. 11). "The birthright of every American male is a chronic sense of personal inadequacy," is how two psychologists describe it today (Woolfolk & Richardson, 1978, p. 57).

That nightmare from which we never seem to awaken is that those other men will see that sense of inadequacy, they will see that in our own eyes we are not who we are pretending to be. What we call masculinity is often a hedge against being revealed as a fraud, an exaggerated set of activities that keep others from seeing through us, and a frenzied effort to keep at bay those fears within ourselves. Our real fear "is not fear of women but of being ashamed or humiliated in front of other men, or being dominated by stronger men" (Leverenz, 1986, p. 451).

This, then, is the great secret of American manhood: We are afraid of other men. Homophobia is a central organizing principle of our cultural definition of manhood. Homophobia is more than the irrational fear of gay men, more than the fear that we might be perceived as gay. "The word 'faggot' has nothing to do with homosexual experience or even with fears of homosexuals," writes David Leverenz (1986). "It comes out of the depths of manhood: a label of ultimate contempt for anyone who seems sissy, untough, uncool" (p. 455). Homophobia is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men. We are afraid to let other men see that fear. Fear makes us ashamed, because the recognition of fear in ourselves is proof to ourselves that we are not
as manly as we pretend, that we are, like the young man in a poem by Yeats, "one that ruffles in a manly pose for all his timid heart." Our fear is the fear of humiliation. We are ashamed to be afraid.

Shame leads to silence—the silences that keep other people believing that we actually approve of the things that are done to women, to minorities, to gays and lesbians in our culture. The frightened silence as we scurry past a woman being hassled by men on the street. That furtive silence when men make sexist or racist jokes in a bar. That clammy-handed silence when guys in the office make gay-bashing jokes. Our fears are the sources of our silences, and men's silence is what keeps the system running. This might help to explain why women often complain that their male friends or partners are often so understanding when they are alone and yet laugh at sexist jokes or even make those jokes themselves when they are out with a group.

The fear of being seen as a sissy dominates the cultural definitions of manhood. It starts so early. "Boys among boys are ashamed to be unmanly," wrote one educator in 1871 (cited in Rotundo, 1993, p. 264). I have a standing bet with a friend that I can walk onto any playground in America where 6-year-old boys are happily playing and by asking one question, I can provoke a fight. That question is simple: "Who's a sissy around here?" Once posed, the challenge is made. One of two things is likely to happen. One boy will accuse another of being a sissy, to which that boy will respond that he is not a sissy, that the first boy is. They may have to fight it out to see who's lying. Or a whole group of boys will surround one boy and all shout "He is! He is!" That boy will either burst into tears and run home crying, disgraced, or he will have to take on several boys at once, to prove that he's not a sissy. (And what will his father or older brothers tell him if he chooses to run home crying?) It will be some time before he regains any sense of self-respect.

Violence is often the single most evident marker of manhood. Rather it is the willingness to fight, the desire to fight. The origin of our expression that one has a chip on one's shoulder lies in the practice of an adolescent boy in the country or small town at the turn of the century, who would literally walk around with a chip of wood balanced on his shoulder—a signal of his readiness to fight with anyone who would take the initiative of knocking the chip off (see Gorer, 1964, p. 38; Mead, 1969).

As adolescents, we learn that our peers are a kind of gender police, constantly threatening to unmask us as feminine, as sissies. One of the favorite tricks when I was an adolescent was to ask a boy to look at his fingernails. If he held his palm toward his face and curled his fingers back to see them, he passed the test. He'd looked at his nails "like a man." But if he held the back of his hand away from his face, and looked at his fingernails with arm outstretched, he was immediately ridiculed as a sissy.

As young men we are constantly riding those gender boundaries, checking the fences we have constructed on the perimeter, making sure that nothing even remotely feminine might show through. The possibilities of being unmasked are everywhere. Even the most seemingly insignificant thing can pose a threat or activate that haunting terror. On the day the students in my course "Sociology of Men and Masculinities" were scheduled to discuss homophobia and male-male friendships, one student provided a touching illustration. Noting that it was a beautiful day, the first day of spring after a brutal northeast winter, he decided to wear shorts to class. "I had this really nice pair of new Madras shorts," he commented. "But then I thought to myself, these shorts have lavender and pink in them. Today's class topic is homophobia. Maybe today is not the best day to wear these shorts."

Our efforts to maintain a manly front cover everything we do. What we wear. How we talk. How we walk. What we eat. Every mannerism, every
movement contains a coded gender language. Think, for example, of how you would answer the question: How do you “know” if a man is homosexual? When I ask this question in classes or workshops, respondents invariably provide a pretty standard list of stereotypically effeminate behaviors. He walks a certain way, talks a certain way, acts a certain way. He’s very emotional; he shows his feelings. One woman commented that she “knows” a man is gay if he really cares about her; another said she knows he’s gay if he shows no interest in her, if he leaves her alone.

Now alter the question and imagine what heterosexual men do to make sure no one could possibly get the “wrong idea” about them. Responses typically refer to the original stereotypes, this time as a set of negative rules about behavior. Never dress that way. Never talk or walk that way. Never show your feelings or get emotional. Always be prepared to demonstrate sexual interest in women that you meet, so it is impossible for any woman to get the wrong idea about you. In this sense, homophobia, the fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real man, keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity, including sexual predation with women. Homophobia and sexism go hand in hand.

The stakes of perceived sissydom are enormous—sometimes matters of life and death. We take enormous risks to prove our manhood, exposing ourselves disproportionately to health risks, workplace hazards, and stress-related illnesses. Men commit suicide three times as often as women. Psychiatrist Willard Gaylin (1992) explains that it is “invariably because of perceived social humiliation,” most often tied to failure in business:

Men become depressed because of loss of status and power in the world of men. It is not the loss of money, or the material advantages that money could buy, which produces the despair that leads to self-destruction. It is the “shame,” the “humiliation,” the sense of personal “failure.”...A man despairs when he has ceased being a man among men. (p. 32)

In one survey, women and men were asked what they were most afraid of. Women responded that they were most afraid of being raped and murdered. Men responded that they were most afraid of being laughed at (Noble, 1992, pp. 105–106).

HOMOPHOBIA AS A CAUSE OF SEXISM, HETEROSEXISM, AND RACISM

Homophobia is intimately interwoven with both sexism and racism. The fear—sometimes conscious, sometimes not—that others might perceive us as homosexual propels men to enact all manner of exaggerated masculine behaviors and attitudes to make sure that no one could possibly get the wrong idea about us. One of the centerpieces of that exaggerated masculinity is putting women down, both by excluding them from the public sphere and by the quotidian put-downs in speech and behaviors that organize the daily life of the American man. Women and gay men become the “other” against which heterosexual men project their identities, against whom they stack the decks so as to compete in a situation in which they will always win, so that by suppressing them, men can stake a claim for their own manhood. Women threaten emasculation by representing the home, workplace, and familial responsibility, the negation of fun. Gay men have historically played the role of the consummate sissy in the American popular mind because homosexuality is seen as an inversion of normal gender development. There have been other
"others." Through American history, various groups have represented the sissy, the non-men against whom American men played out their definitions of manhood, often with vicious results. In fact, these changing groups provide an interesting lesson in American historical development.

At the turn of the 19th century, it was Europeans and children who provided the contrast for American men. The "true American was vigorous, manly, and direct, not effete and corrupt like the supposed Europeans," writes Rupert Wilkinson (1986). "He was plain rather than ornamented, rugged rather than luxury seeking, a liberty loving common man or natural gentleman rather than an aristocratic oppressor or servile minion" (p. 96). The "real man" of the early 19th century was neither noble nor serf. By the middle of the century, black slaves had replaced the effete nobleman. Slaves were seen as dependent, helpless men, incapable of defending their women and children, and therefore less than manly. Native Americans were cast as foolish and naive children, so they could be infantilized as the "Red Children of the Great White Father" and therefore excluded from full manhood.

By the end of the century, new European immigrants were also added to the list of the unreal men, especially the Irish and Italians, who were seen as too passionate and emotionally volatile to remain controlled sturdiy oaks, and Jews, who were seen as too bookishly effete and too physically puny to truly measure up. In the mid-20th century, it was also Asians—first the Japanese during the Second World War, and more recently, the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War—who have served as unmanly templates against which American men have hurled their gendered rage. Asian men were seen as small, soft, and effeminate—hardly men at all.

Such a list of "hyphenated" Americans—Italian-, Jewish-, Irish-, African-, Native-, Asian-, gay—composes the majority of American men. So manhood is only possible for a distinct minority, and the definition has been constructed to prevent the others from achieving it. Interestingly, this emasculation of one's enemies has a flip side—and one that is equally gendered. These very groups that have historically been cast as less than manly were also, often simultaneously, cast as hypermasculine, as sexually aggressive, violent rapacious beasts, against whom "civilized" men must take a decisive stand and thereby rescue civilization. Thus black men were depicted as rampaging sexual beasts, women as carnivorous carnal, gay men as sexually insatiable, southern European men as sexually predatory and voracious, and Asian men as vicious and cruel torturers who were immorally disinterested in life itself, willing to sacrifice their entire people for their whims. But whether one saw these groups as effeminate sissies or as brutal uncivilized savages, the terms with which they were perceived were gendered. These groups become the "others," the screens against which traditional conceptions of manhood were developed.

Being seen as unmanly is a fear that propels American men to deny manhood to others, as a way of proving the unprovable—that one is fully manly. Masculinity becomes a defense against the perceived threat of humiliation in the eyes of other men, enacted through a "sequence of postures"—things we might say, or do, or even think, that, if we thought carefully about them, would make us ashamed of ourselves (Savran, 1992, p. 16). After all, how many of us have made homophobic or sexist remarks, or told racist jokes, or made lewd comments to women on the street? How many of us have translated those ideas and those words into actions, by physically attacking gay men, or forcing or cajoling a woman to have sex even though she didn't really want to because it was important to score?
POWER AND POWERLESSNESS IN THE LIVES OF MEN

I have argued that homophobia, men's fear of other men, is the animating condition of the dominant definition of masculinity in America, that the reigning definition of masculinity is a defensive effort to prevent being emasculated. In our efforts to suppress or overcome those fears, the dominant culture exacts a tremendous price from those deemed less than fully manly: women, gay men, nonnative-born men, men of color. This perspective may help clarify a paradox in men's lives, a paradox in which men have virtually all the power and yet do not feel powerful (see Kaufman, 1993).

Manhood is equated with power—over women, over other men. Everywhere we look, we see the institutional expression of that power—in state and national legislatures, on the boards of directors of every major U.S. corporation or law firm, and in every school and hospital administration. Women have long understood this, and feminist women have spent the past three decades challenging both the public and the private expressions of men's power and acknowledging their fear of men. Feminism as a set of theories both explains women's fear of men and empowers women to confront it both publicly and privately. Feminist women have theorized that masculinity is about the drive for domination, the drive for power, for conquest.

This feminist definition of masculinity as the drive for power is theorized from women's point of view. It is how women experience masculinity. But it assumes a symmetry between the public and the private that does not conform to men's experiences. Feminists observe that women, as a group, do not hold power in our society. They also observe that individually, they, as women, do not feel powerful. They feel afraid, vulnerable. Their observation of the social reality and their individual experiences are therefore symmetrical. Feminism also observes that men, as a group, are in power. Thus, with the same symmetry, feminism has tended to assume that individually men must feel powerful.

This is why the feminist critique of masculinity often falls on deaf ears with men. When confronted with the analysis that men have all the power, many men react incredulously. "What do you mean, men have all the power?" they ask. "What are you talking about? My wife bosses me around. My kids boss me around. My boss bosses me around. I have no power at all! I'm completely powerless!"

Men's feelings are not the feelings of the powerful, but of those who see themselves as powerless. These are the feelings that come inevitably from the discontinuity between the social and the psychological, between the aggregate analysis that reveals how men are in power as a group and the psychological fact that they do not feel powerful as individuals. They are the feelings of men who were raised to believe themselves entitled to feel that power, but do not feel it. No wonder many men are frustrated and angry.

This may explain the recent popularity of those workshops and retreats designed to help men to claim their "inner" power, their "deep manhood," or their "warrior within." Authors such as Bly (1990), Moore and Gillette (1991, 1992, 1993a, 1993b), Farrell (1986, 1993), and Keen (1991) honor and respect men's feelings of powerlessness and acknowledge those feelings to be both true and real. "They gave white men the semblance of power," notes John Lee, one of the leaders of these retreats (quoted in Newsweek, p. 41). "We'll let you run the country, but in the meantime, stop feeling, stop talking, and continue swallowing your pain and your hurt." (We are not told who "they" are.)

Often the purveyors of the mythopoetic men's movement, that broad umbrella that encompasses all the groups helping men to retrieve this mythic deep manhood, use the image of the chauffeur to describe modern man's position. The chauffeur appears to have the power—he's wearing the uniform,
he's in the driver's seat, and he knows where he's going. So, to the observer, the chauffer looks as though he is in command. But to the chauffer himself, they note, he is merely taking orders. He is not at all in charge.7

Despite the reality that everyone knows chauffeurs do not have the power, this image remains appealing to the men who hear it at these weekend workshops. But there is a missing piece to the image, a piece concealed by the framing of the image in terms of the individual man's experience. That missing piece is that the person who is giving the orders is also a man. Now we have a relationship between men—between men giving orders and other men taking those orders. The man who identifies with the chauffer is entitled to be the man giving the orders, but he is not. ("They," it turns out, are other men.)

The dimension of power is now reinserted into men's experience not only as the product of individual experience but also as the product of relations with other men. In this sense, men's experience of powerlessness is real—the men actually feel it and certainly act on it—but it is not true, that is, it does not accurately describe their condition. In contrast to women's lives, men's lives are structured around relationships of power and men's differential access to power, as well as the differential access to that power of men as a group. Our imperfect analysis of our own situation leads us to believe that we men need more power, rather than leading us to support feminists' efforts to rearrange power relationships along more equitable lines.

Philosopher Hannah Arendt (1970) fully understood this contradictory experience of social and individual power:

Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is "in power," we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with . . . disappears, "his power" also vanishes. (p. 44)

Why, then, do American men feel so powerless? Part of the answer is because we've constructed the rules of manhood so that only the tiniest fraction of men come to believe that they are the biggest of wheels, the sturdiest of oaks, the most virulent repudiators of femininity, the most daring and aggressive. We've managed to disempower the overwhelming majority of American men by other means—such as discriminating on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, age, or sexual preference.

Masculinist retreats to retrieve deep, wounded, masculinity are but one of the ways in which American men currently struggle with their fears and their shame. Unfortunately, at the very moment that they work to break down the isolation that governs men's lives, as they enable men to express those fears and that shame, they ignore the social power that men continue to exert over women and the privileges from which they (as the middle-aged, middle-class white men who largely make up these retreats) continue to benefit—regardless of their experiences as wounded victims of oppressive male socialization.

Others still rehearse the politics of exclusion, as if by clearing away the playing field of secure gender identity of any that we deem less than manly—women, gay men, nonnative-born men, men of color—middle-class, straight, white men can reground their sense of themselves without those haunting fears and that deep shame that they are unmanly and will be exposed by other men. This is the manhood of racism, of sexism, of homophobia. It is the manhood that is so chronically insecure that it trembles at the idea of lifting
the ban on gays in the military, that is so threatened by women in the workplace that women become the targets of sexual harassment, that is so deeply frightened of equality that it must ensure that the playing field of male competition remains stacked against all newcomers to the game.

Exclusion and escape have been the dominant methods American men have used to keep their fears of humiliation at bay. The fear of emasculation by other men, of being humiliated, of being seen as a sissy, is the leitmotif in my reading of the history of American manhood. Masculinity has become a relentless test by which we prove to other men, to women, and ultimately to ourselves, that we have successfully mastered the part. The restlessness that men feel today is nothing new in American history; we have been anxious and restless for almost two centuries. Neither exclusion nor escape has ever brought us the relief we've sought, and there is no reason to think that either will solve our problems now. Peace of mind, relief from gender struggle, will come only from a politics of inclusion, not exclusion, from standing up for equality and justice, and not by running away.

NOTES

1. Of course, the phrase “American manhood” contains several simultaneous fictions. There is no single manhood that defines all American men; “America” is meant to refer to the United States proper, and there are significant ways in which this “American manhood” is the outcome of forces that transcend both gender and nation, that is, the global economic development of industrial capitalism. I use it, therefore, to describe the specific hegemonic version of masculinity in the United States, that normative constellation of attitudes, traits, and behaviors that became the standard against which all other masculinities are measured and against which individual men measure the success of their gender accomplishments.

2. Much of this work is elaborated in Manhood: The American Quest (in press).

3. Although I am here discussing only American masculinity, I am aware that others have located this chronic instability and efforts to prove manhood in the particular cultural and economic arrangements of Western society. Calvin, after all, inveighed against the disgrace “for men to become effeminate,” and countless other theorists have described the mechanics of manly proof. (See, for example, Seidler, 1994.)

4. I do not mean to argue that women do not have anxieties about whether they are feminine enough. Ask any woman how she feels about being called aggressive; it sends a chill into her heart because her femininity is suspect. (I believe that the reason for the enormous recent popularity of sexy lingerie among women is that it enables women to remember they are still feminine underneath their corporate business suit—a suit that apes masculine styles.) But I think the stakes are not as great for women and that women have greater latitude in defining their identities around these questions than men do. Such are the ironies of sexism: The powerful have a narrower range of options than the powerless, because the powerless can also imitate the powerful and get away with it. It may even enhance status, if done with charm and grace—that is, not threatening. For the powerful, any hint of behaving like the powerless is a fall from grace.

5. Such observations also led journalist Heywood Broun to argue that most of the attacks against feminism came from men who were shorter than 5 ft. 7 in. “The man who, whatever his physical size, feels secure in his own masculinity and in his own relation to life is rarely resentful of the opposite sex” (cited in Symes, 1930, p. 139).

6. Some of Freud's followers, such as Anna Freud and Alfred Adler, did follow up on these suggestions. (See especially Adler, 1980.) I am grateful to Terry Kupers for his help in thinking through Adler's ideas.

7. The image is from Warren Farrell, who spoke at a workshop I attended at the First International Men's Conference, Austin, Texas, October 1991.
REFERENCES


Deaf American Culture: Notes from the Periphery

Kathee M. Christensen

Deaf people in America comprise a unique and powerful cultural unit. They are unique because of a world view that is, by necessity, visual in nature. They are powerful because of a vehement refusal to allow the discrimination, the "audism" as it has been called, of hearing persons to limit and proscribe Deaf cultural identity. The majority of my life has involved the social, political, and linguistic facets of the Deaf community even though I, myself, am not audiologically deaf. *Deaf America* will be the term used to designate the cultural group of this chapter.

In reality, I thought that the whole world knew sign language. I did not realize that most people are sign language-impaired until I was five years old. My first home was situated in close proximity to the primary school and dormitory which housed the youngest Deaf children in the school. My first playmates were the children from the primary unit. All of them signed, some of them talked, and all of the adults that supervised them could do both. Since my mother taught in the high school, she knew and hired the brightest and most capable Deaf girls as my babysitters. From them, and from my bilingual parents, I learned to sign and talk at more or less the same time. This was useful, since I rarely knew in advance whether or not the guest walking through our door on any given day would sign or talk to me. It really didn't matter! My parents used sign language as naturally as they spoke English and switched back and forth from one language to the other as the occasion required. As soon as I could toddle down the hill to the primary dorm playground, I found instant playmates and an abundance of toys to share. Communication was never an issue. As I look back on this time in my life, it seems that the majority of the people who came into and went out of our house on Miller Road at the edge of the MSD campus used American Sign Language (ASL). However, it was not called ASL at that time. It was just sign language, qualified occasionally as the "kind of sign language that the Deaf teachers use in the manual unit" or the "kind of sign language that the kids use on the playground." The official christening of ASL was yet to happen, although the actual language was being used consistently by most of the deaf people in my immediate environment.

I encountered the prejudice of hearing people against deafness and Deaf people when I entered kindergarten in the local public school. For the first time in my life, I was surrounded by children and adults who knew only one language, English. It was amazing, even more amazing were the words of my teacher, "We don't use that deaf and dumb talk here!" "Why not?" was my immediate reaction. After all, in my world even Santa Claus could sign!

In looking back on my early years, I realize that I was probably more fortunate than many of my Deaf friends when it comes to the issue of communication. Practically from birth I had the benefit of two rich languages, both of which were used consistently in my home and social environment. As my circle of Deaf friends grew over the years, and I listened to more and more stories about their early experiences, I was struck by the early social deprivation that many of them endured. Approximately 90 percent of Deaf children in America are born to parents who are not Deaf. The majority of these children do not encounter signed language until they enter a formal educational program; and if the school does not subscribe to a
bilingual American Sign Language and English philosophy, the quality of signed language may vary from barely comprehensible to meaningless. Why does this condition exist? Perhaps it is because educators consider deafness to be a "low incidence disability" rather than a cultural and linguistic difference.

The number of Deaf children enrolled in public school programs in the United States is relatively small. More than 90 percent of the persons who teach these children are hearing, European American women who have a cursory knowledge of signed language. So, a Deaf child who enrolls in a public school in America rarely finds a cultural role model behind the teacher's desk. Role models can be found, however, and the most likely place to find them is at the state residential, or center, school.

Each state has at least one residential school for children who are Deaf. These schools are organized into campuses with complete residential, medical, social, and educational facilities. A typical residential school will employ more deaf staff, in various occupations, than will a general education program, or day school. Over the years, the state residential schools have been regarded as the "hub" of the Deaf culture. These schools provide access to signed communication through recreational and social programs as well as in the academic setting. In recent years, some positive changes have been occurring in many residential school programs. Educators who are themselves Deaf are more visible in positions of leadership, and a movement toward bilingual education has been one result of this informed leadership. Another positive trend is the examination of the sign language skills of professional educators who work with Deaf children. This long overdue concern for early, salient communication access was fomented by a position paper which asserted that "current approaches to deaf education continue to pursue English-only and speech-dominant approaches...which expect the children to learn curricular material through communication in a form which they can understand only imperfectly at best" (Johnson et al. 1989:11). Classroom teachers who employed signed language frequently were perceived to use sign language inefficiently and elliptically, thus providing a fractured visual model of a partial language. The educational problems created by this lack of access to a complete, salient receptive language were apparent particularly in the reading and writing performance of Deaf learners. Moving the focus away from the child's performance and toward the inadequate language input in most classrooms is critical to the reform of modern educational practice. Many educators, aware of the growing body of ASL linguistic research, are beginning to understand that, as William Stokoe so aptly stated, "language is not mouth stuff—it's brain stuff" (Wolkomir 1992). Deaf leaders are beginning to encourage a paradigm shift away from a medical disability perspective and toward a cultural and linguistic view of deafness as manifested in Deaf Culture.

Language is the real key to unlocking cultural understanding, and, in particular, American Sign Language is the key to Deaf American culture.

In my opinion, the American Sign Language (ASL) is quite possibly the most misunderstood language in present-day society. This is true despite the fact that ASL is the fourth most commonly used language in contemporary America and ASL is included as one of the recognized languages of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). In fact, ASL has existed formally in a variety of educational and social programs in America since the mid-nineteenth century, 1830 to be exact (Scouten 1984). Why the misunderstanding? There are several possible explanations.

First of all, ASL is used primarily by a group of people who, for the most part, look and act like native English users and may, in fact, qualify for that category. For the most part, members of the Deaf American Culture do not come from a different country. And, with the possible exception of Martha's Vineyard in the 1800s where, due to the overwhelming presence of hereditary deafness, almost everyone was bilingual in English and ASL (Groce 1985), culturally Deaf people do not lay claim to any particular expanse of land.
ASL users are Deaf and hearing persons, most of whom are bilingual and many of whom have acquired English as a second language. People unfamiliar with Deaf culture typically observe ASL from the familiar vantage point of spoken standard English with its concomitant body of written literature. The non-ASL user may have a medical perspective of deafness as a disability rather than a language difference, and may not perceive signed languages as equal to spoken languages. Non-ASL users may be introduced to signed communication in a situation such as a theatrical performance or lecture where an ASL interpreter voices English in order to translate ASL to the entire audience. Or it could be that a non-ASL user has witnessed a hearing person who speaks English and simultaneously produces signed equivalents so that both hearing and Deaf persons can receive the same input. In simultaneous communication, signs are borrowed from ASL and placed within a spoken English format as a way of accommodating communication between English speakers and ASL signers. ASL users have learned to adapt to English, however, ASL is not a form of English. ASL is a visual-spatial language with its own syntax, semantics, and pragmatics and a unique literary tradition (Klima & Bellugi 1979).

Unless one has lived or grown up in the Deaf community, it may be difficult to understand the visual-spatial dimensions of this culture. Baker & Cokley (1980) proposed a model of Deaf culture that involves four essential factors:

1. audiological—one must have a hearing loss of some degree;
2. social—one must associate with Deaf people socially, e.g., go to Deaf clubs, attend a residential school for the deaf, marry a Deaf person;
3. political—serve as an officer of a Deaf organization such as the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) or one of its affiliates, or wield power in the Deaf community;
4. linguistic—ASL fluency—this is the most important factor.

According to Baker & Cokley, overarching these factors is ATTITUDE. A person with a positive attitude and involvement with at least three of the four factors listed above can be considered as a member of the Deaf culture. Therefore, hearing persons, for example hearing children of Deaf parents, may identify with Deaf culture more comfortably than the so-called "hearing" culture, or they may perceive themselves bicultural. Cultural identity is a personal choice and not an imposition.

Padden and Humphries (1988) offer another definition of Deaf culture. They assert that "people who are Deaf can have a range of hearing abilities from 'hard of hearing' to 'profoundly deaf,' and, conversely, there are people with severe or profound hearing impairment who do not participate in the community of Deaf people." They have suggested that "we use lowercase deaf when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language—American Sign Language—and a culture" (1988:2).

Padden and Humphries further point out that ASL users have the opportunity to perceive communication from a unique cultural center. ASL users construct their worlds and choose their words from a center that takes complete advantage of the communicative resources of movement, form, facial expressions, and a unique application of sound. ASL users broaden their understanding of communication through the use of a variety of dynamic components. This open-mindedness to multiple facets of communication may be an advantage that allows culturally Deaf persons to deal more effectively with the diversity in our increasingly multicultural contemporary society. Since Deaf people, as a rule, are accustomed to encountering language barriers as a natural part of everyday life, they become proficient at negotiating communication, through various means including writing, miming, gesturing, speech reading, and other creative options, with persons who are able to use only spoken language. For Deaf people, easy, accessible communication on a daily basis is not taken for granted.

It is difficult for many hearing individuals to consider the possibility of someone communicating solely through a spatial medium. Those who have acquired ASL as
a first language and those who have achieved fluency through study and use of the language have a different perspective. If asked to describe the differences between the two languages, the ASL-second language user might identify the task of translating an English idiom into a visual-spatial equivalent, or vice versa. The concept may "suffer in the translation," as is often the case with translation from one spoken language to another. The process of ASL acquisition and use is a fairly recent topic of academic research. Pioneers in the field include William Stokoe at Gallaudet University and Ursula Bellugi at the Salk Institute. Their work has brought signed language into the forefront of innovative linguistic research and has helped to solidify, popularize, and provide academic credibility to the term ASL.

It is interesting to trace the evolution of the terminology used for Deaf language. For example, "sign language" became "Ameslan" (Fant 1972) and "Ameslan," ultimately, became "American Sign Language" or "ASL" (Klima & Bellugi 1979). At the turn of the century, persons who could not hear were referred to as "deaf." In the 1970s the terms "deaf and hard-of-hearing" were replaced by a generic term "hearing-impaired." In the late 1980s, the distinction was made between culturally "Deaf" individuals and medically "deaf and hard-of-hearing" persons. Gates (1994) has made the observation that the "linguistic trend toward condensation is strong," that is, we tend to economize our language, over time. Telephone becomes phone, television becomes TV, bicycle becomes bike and so forth. In his book entitled Colored People, Gates even predicts that the African American community will eventually give up terms such as "people of color" and will once again revert to the term of choice of the 1950s, colored people." If the rule of condensation can be applied to all cultures, one might predict the eventual and exclusive use of the single word "Deaf" to describe, in general, persons in the Deaf American community.

The extent to which the brain uses signed language to enhance communication and cognitive development is the subject of some innovative current research. The work of Bellugi and other linguists at the Salk Institute in San Diego has provided insights into the acquisition and use of visual-spatial languages as they are passed from one generation to the next. Their research has shed some new light on the determinants of hemispheric specialization for language, suggesting that "the left hemisphere in humans may have an innate predisposition for language, regardless of the modality" (Bellugi 1991:32). Interesting new research at the University of California—Davis is considering the potential of signed language as a means of enhancing the cognitive development of babies who have intact hearing ability. Quite possibly this work will parallel the research of Pettito (1994), which studies the equipotentiality of signed and spoken languages in infants and toddlers, both Deaf and hearing. There is much to be learned from these and other studies, and from members of the Deaf community who inform these research projects.

Inherent in Deaf culture, and an enhancement to the study of ASL and ASL literature, are the visual arts. The metaphor that guides one gifted ASL storyteller is his ability to "paint poetry in the air" (Bragg 1994). Those fortunate enough to see such a performance, and to understand it without translation, experience a vibrant combination of literature, art, and theater in a truly unique dimension. Hearing ASL users often describe such an experience, say a production of the National Theater of the Deaf, as less dynamic with the presence of a voice interpreter who laboriously gives spoken words to a visual act that communicates eloquently through hands, face, and body to the eyes and minds of the audience in a language designed to be seen and not heard. In some cases, hearing ASL users learn to "turn off their hearing" in order to appreciate more fully the signed experience. Deaf West Theater in Los Angeles provides a wonderful service to hearing theater-goers who can listen to voice interpreters through earphones, thus allowing a visual theatrical experience for those who prefer to watch undisturbed by vocal translations.

Society, in general, is becoming more aware of Deaf culture through a number of opportunities that are available now. Linda Bove, a Deaf actress, is a resident on Sesame Street; Marlee Matlin, an award-winning Deaf actress, appears quite
regularly on television and in film, Miss America 1994–1995 was the Deaf dancer, Heather Whitestone; and more and more televised commercials include persons who use signed language. Schools and universities around the United States have begun to offer American Sign Language as an alternative for "foreign" language requirements. Hearing authors such as Harlan Lane (1992) and Oliver Sacks (1989) have described Deaf culture and the Deaf community in popular books. In Seeing Voices, for example, Sacks uses the Deaf community as a springboard to ponder such issues as formation of communities, worlds, and cultures and the interface of language, biology, and culture. As exposure of Deaf American culture grows across the nation, Deaf people are becoming more visible and recognized for their talents.

As I reflect on my personal experience as a marginal member of the Deaf culture, I realize that I can never know what it is like to be physically Deaf. I can view Deaf culture only from the periphery, with profound respect for the persons who must encounter discrimination in practically every aspect of life. In this regard, Deaf American culture can be compared to other American cultural groups who also have endured discrimination and suppression by an insensitive majority. Langston Hughes, the acclaimed African-American poet of the Harlem Renaissance, speaks eloquently to this point. In "Note on Commercial Theater" he laments that "You've taken my blues and gone." Replace the word blues with the word signs and you have the situation of an attempt to destroy ASL through the creation of artificial sign systems. In the poem "Note," he alludes to the spirit of survival—"Tomorrow belongs to me"—which was so evident in the Deaf President Now revolt at Gallaudet University in 1988. In both cases, the oppression of a dominant culture is evident through an attempt of the majority culture to limit opportunities and suppress self-expression. Deaf people are the experts in defining and constructing their own cultural experience—in identifying themselves and describing their journey. For years, for generations, the control of the Deaf community has been in the inept hands of hearing educators and members of the medical community. For years, for generations, Deaf people have been limited by obstacles that hearing people create. Rather than noticing the connections between their cultures, Deaf and hearing persons often shut themselves off from one another, avoiding the effort, or risk, of honest two-way communication. In fact, the ability to share one's culture with another is a precious, personal gift. We are beginning gradually to see the benefits of more cross-cultural communication among Deaf and hearing people, particularly in settings where very young Deaf and hearing children are learning to communicate with each other through visual-spatial means. The notion that these children will grow up with a positive attitude toward cultural and linguistic diversity, a healthy respect for more visual-spatial communication, and greater opportunities for cross-cultural understanding is, at this point, a dream. And, as Langston Hughes wrote, "This dream today embattled, With its back against the wall—To save the dream for one—It must be saved for all."

REFERENCES


Oppression

Marilyn Frye

It is a fundamental claim of feminism that women are oppressed. The word “oppression” is a strong word. It repels and attracts. It is dangerous and dangerously fashionable and endangered. It is much misused, and sometimes not innocently.

The statement that women are oppressed is frequently met with the claim that men are oppressed too. We hear that oppressing is oppressive to those who oppress as well as to those they oppress. Some men cite as evidence of their oppression their much-advertised inability to cry. It is tough, we are told, to be masculine. When the stresses and frustrations of being a man are cited as evidence that oppressors are oppressed by their oppressing, the word “oppression” is being stretched to meaninglessness; it is treated as though its scope includes any and all human experience of limitation or suffering, no matter the cause, degree or consequence. Once such usage has been put over on us, then if ever we deny that any person or group is oppressed, we seem to imply that we think they never suffer and have no feelings. We are accused of insensitivity; even of bigotry. For women, such accusation is particularly intimidating, since sensitivity is one of the few virtues that has been assigned to us. If we are found insensitive, we may fear we have no redeeming traits at all and perhaps are not real women. Thus are we silenced before we begin: the name of our situation drained of meaning and our guilt mechanisms tripped.

But this is nonsense. Human beings can be miserable without being oppressed, and it is perfectly consistent to deny that a person or group is oppressed without denying that they have feelings or that they suffer.

We need to think clearly about oppression, and there is much that mitigates against this. I do not want to undertake to prove that women are oppressed (or that men are not), but I want to make clear what is being said when we say it. We need this word, this concept, and we need it to be sharp and sure.

The root of the word “oppression” is the element “press.” The press of the crowd; pressed into military service; to press a pair of pants; printing press; press the button. Presses are used to mold things or flatten them or reduce them in bulk, sometimes to reduce them by squeezing out the gasses or liquids in them. Something pressed is something caught between or among forces and barriers which are so related to each other that jointly they restrain, restrict or prevent the thing’s motion or mobility. Mold. Immobilize. Reduce.

The mundane experience of the oppressed provides another clue. One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the double bind situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation. For example, it is often a requirement upon oppressed people that we smile and be cheerful. If we comply, we signal our docility and our acquiescence in our situation. We need not, then, be taken note of. We acquiesce in being made invisible, in our occupying no space. We participate in our own erasure. On the other hand, anything, but the sunniest countenance exposes us to being perceived as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous. This means, at the least, that we may be found “difficult” or unpleasant to work with, which is enough to cost one one’s livelihood; at worst, being seen as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous has been known to result in rape, arrest, beating and murder. One can only choose to risk one’s preferred form and rate of annihilation.

Another example: It is common in the United States that women, especially younger women, are in a bind where neither sexual activity nor sexual inactivity is all right. If she is heterosexually active, a woman is open to censure and punishment for being loose, unprincipled or a whore. The “punishment” comes in the form of criticism, snide and embarrassing remarks, being treated as an easy lay by men, scorn from her
more restrained female friends. She may have to lie and hide her behavior from her parents. She must juggle the risks of unwanted pregnancy and dangerous contraceptives. On the other hand, if she refrains from heterosexuality, she is fairly constantly harassed by men who try to persuade her into it and pressure her to “relax” and “let her hair down”; she is threatened with labels like “frigid,” “uptight,” “manhater,” “bitch” and “cocktease.” The same parents who would be disapproving of her sexual activity may be worried by her inactivity because it suggests she is not or will not be popular, or is not sexually normal. She may be charged with lesbianism. If a woman is raped, then if she has been heterosexually active she is subject to the presumption that she liked it (since her activity is presumed to show that she likes sex), and if she has not been heterosexually active, she is subject to the presumption that she liked it (since she is supposedly “repressed and frustrated”). Both heterosexual activity and heterosexual nonactivity are likely to be taken as proof that you wanted to be raped, and hence, of course, weren’t really raped at all. You can’t win. You are caught in a bind, caught between systematically related pressures.

Women are caught like this, too, by networks of forces and barriers that expose one to penalty, loss or contempt whether one works outside the home or not, is on welfare or not, bears children or not, raises children or not, marries or not, stays married or not, is heterosexual, lesbian, both or neither. Economic necessity; confinement to racial and/or sexual ghettos; sexual harassment; sex discrimination; pressures of competing expectations and judgments about women, wives and mothers (in the society at large, in racial and ethnic subcultures and in one’s own mind); dependence (full or partial) on husbands, parents or the state; commitment to political ideas; loyalties to racial or ethnic or other “minority” groups; the demands of self-respect and responsibilities to others. Each of these factors exists in complex tension with every other, penalizing or prohibiting all of the apparently available options. And nipping at one’s heels, always, is the endless pack of little things. If one dresses one way, one is subject to the assumption that one is advertising one’s sexual availability; if one dresses another way, one appears to “not care about oneself” or to be “un-feminine.” If one uses “strong language,” one invites categorization as a whore or slut; if one does not, one invites categorization as a “lady,” one too delicately constituted to cope with robust speech or the realities to which it presumably refers.

The experience of oppressed people is that the living of one’s life is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction. It is the experience of being caged in: all avenues, in every direction, are blocked or booby trapped.

Cages. Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire any time it wanted to go somewhere. Furthermore, even if, one day at a time, you myopically inspected each wire, you still could not see why a bird would have trouble going past the wires to get anywhere. There is no physical property of any one wire, nothing that the closest scrutiny could discover, that will reveal how a bird could be inhibited or harmed by it except in the most accidental way. It is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere: and then you will see it in a moment. It will require no great subtlety of mental powers. It is perfectly obvious that the bird is surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, no one of which would be the least hindrance to its flight, but which, by their relations to each other, are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon.

It is now possible to grasp one of the reasons why oppression can be hard to see and recognize: one can study the elements of an oppressive structure with great care and some good will without seeing the structure as a whole, and hence without seeing or being able to understand that one is looking at a cage and that there are people there who are caged, whose motion and mobility are restricted, whose lives are shaped and reduced.

The arresting of vision at a microscopic level yields such common confusion as that about the male door opening ritual. This ritual, which is remarkably widespread across classes and races, puzzles many people, some of whom do and some of whom do not find it offensive. Look at the scene of the two people approaching a door. The male steps slightly ahead and opens the
door. The male holds the door open while the female glides through. Then the male goes through. The door closes after them. “Now how,” one innocently asks, “can those crazy wom-en-slibbers say that is oppressive? The guy re-moved a barrier to the lady’s smooth and unruffled progress.” But each repetition of this ritual has a place in a pattern, in fact in several patterns. One has to shift the level of one’s perception in order to see the whole picture.

The door-opening pretends to be a helpful service, but the helpfulness is false. This can be seen by noting that it will be done whether or not it makes any practical sense. Infirm men and men burdened with packages will open doors for able-bodied women who are free of physical burdens. Men will impede themselves awkwardly and jostle everyone in order to get to the door first. The act is not determined by convenience or grace. Furthermore, these very numerous acts of unneeded or even noisome “help” occur in counterpoint to a pattern of men not being helpful in many practical ways in which women might welcome help. What women experience is a world in which gallant princes charmingly make a fuss about being helpful and providing small services when help and services are of little or no use, but in which there are rarely ingenious and adroit princes at hand when substantial assistance is really wanted either in mundane affairs or in situations of threat, assault or terror. There is no help with the (his) laundry; no help typing a report at 4:00 a.m.; no help in mediating disputes among relatives or children. There is nothing but advice that women should stay indoors after dark, be chaperoned by a man, or when it comes down to it, “lie back and enjoy it.”

The gallant gestures have no practical meaning. Their meaning is symbolic. The door-opening and similar services provided are services which really are needed by people who are for one reason or another incapacitated—unwell, burdened with parcels, etc. So the message is that women are incapable. The detachment of the acts from the concrete realities of what women need and do not need is a vehicle for the message that women’s actual needs and interests are unimportant or irrelevant. Finally, these gestures imitate the behavior of servants toward masters and thus mock women, who are in most respects the servants and caretakers of men. The message of the false helpfulness of male gallantry is female dependence, the invisibility or insignificance of women, and contempt for women.

One cannot see the meanings of these rituals if one’s focus is riveted upon the individual event in all its particularity, including the particularity of the individual man’s present conscious intentions and motives and the individual woman’s conscious perception of the event in the moment. It seems sometimes that people take a deliberately myopic view and fill their eyes with things seen microscopically in order not to see macroscopically. At any rate, whether it is deliberate or not, people and do fail to see the oppression of women because they fail to see macroscopically and hence fail to see the various elements of the situation as systematically related in larger schemes.

As the caginess of the birdcage is a macroscopic phenomenon, the oppressiveness of the situations in which women live our various and different lives is a macroscopic phenomenon. Neither can be seen from a microscopic perspective. But when you look macroscopically you can see it a network of forces and barriers which are systematically related and which conspire to the immobilization, reduction and molding of women and the lives we live.

It seems to be the human condition that in one degree or another we all suffer frustration and limitation, all encounter unwelcome barriers, and all are damaged and hurt in various ways. Since we are a social species, almost all of our behavior and activities are structured by more than individual inclination and the conditions of the planet and its atmosphere. No human is free of social structures, nor (perhaps) would happiness consist in such freedom. Structure consists of boundaries, limits and barriers; in a structured whole, some motions and changes are possible, and others are not. If one is looking for an excuse to dilute the word “oppression,” one can use the fact of social structure as an excuse and say that everyone is oppressed. But if one would rather get clear about what oppression is and is not, one needs to sort out the sufferings, harms and limitations and figure out which are elements of oppression and which are not.

From what I have already said here, it is clear that if one wants to determine whether a particular suffering, harm or limitation is part of someone’s being oppressed, one has to look at it in context in order to tell whether it is an element in an oppressive structure: one has to see if it is part of an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people. One has to look
at how the barrier or force fits with others and to whose benefit or detriment it works. As soon as one looks at examples, it becomes obvious that not everything which frustrates or limits a person is oppressive, and not every harm or damage is due to or contributes to oppression.

If a rich white playboy who lives off income from his investments in South African diamond mines should break a leg in a skiing accident at Aspen and wait in pain in a blizzard for hours before he is rescued, we may assume that in that period he suffers. But the suffering comes to an end; his leg is repaired by the best surgeon money can buy and he is soon recuperating in a lavish suite, sipping Chivas Regal. Nothing in this picture suggests a structure of barriers and forces. He is a member of several oppressor groups and does not suddenly become oppressed because he is injured and in pain. Even if the accident was caused by someone’s malicious negligence, and hence someone can be blamed for it and morally faulted, that person still has not been an agent of oppression.

Consider also the restriction of having to drive one’s vehicle on a certain side of the road. There is no doubt that this restriction is almost unbearably frustrating at times, when one’s lane is not moving and the other lane is clear. There are surely times, even, when abiding by this regulation would have harmful consequences. But the restriction is obviously wholesome for most of us most of the time. The restraint is imposed for our benefit, and does benefit us; its operation tends to encourage our continued motion, not to immobilize us. The limits imposed by traffic regulations are limits most of us would cheerfully impose on ourselves given that we knew others would follow them too. They are part of a structure which shapes our behavior, not to our reduction and immobilization, but rather to the protection of our continued ability to move and act as we will.

Another example: The boundaries of a racial ghetto in an American city serve to some extent to keep white people from going in, as well as to keep ghetto dwellers from going out. A particular white citizen may be frustrated or feel deprived because s/he cannot stroll around there and enjoy the “exotic” aura of a “foreign” culture, or shop for bargains in the ghetto swap shops. In fact, the existence of the ghetto, of racial segregation, does deprive the white person of knowledge and harm her/his character by nurturing unwarranted feelings of superiority. But this does not make the white person in this situation a member of an oppressed race or a person oppressed because of her/his race. One must look at the barrier. It limits the activities and the access of those on both sides of it (though to different degrees). But it is a product of the intention, planning and action of whites for the benefit of whites, to secure and maintain privileges that are available to whites generally, as members of the dominant and privileged group. Though the existence of the barrier has some bad consequences for whites, the barrier does not exist in systematic relationship with other barriers and forces forming a structure oppressive to whites; quite the contrary. It is part of a structure which oppresses the ghetto dwellers and thereby (and by white intention) protects and furthers white interests as dominant white culture understands them. This barrier is not oppressive to whites, even though it is a barrier to whites.

Barriers have different meanings to those on opposite sides of them, even though they are barriers to both. The physical walls of a prison no more dissolve to let an outsider in than to let an insider out, but for the insider they are confining and limiting while to the outsider they may mean protection from what s/he takes to be threats posed by insiders—freedom from harm or anxiety. A set of social and economic barriers and forces separating two groups may be felt, even painfully, by members of both groups and yet may mean confinement to one and liberty and enlargement of opportunity to the other.

The service sector of the wives/mommamas/assistants/girls is almost exclusively a woman-only sector; its boundaries not only enclose women but to a very great extent keep men out. Some men sometimes encounter this barrier and experience it as a restriction on their movements, their activities, their control or their choices of “lifestyle.” Thinking they might like the simple nurturant life (which they may imagine to be quite free of stress, alienation and hard work), and feeling deprived since it seems closed to them, they thereupon announce the discovery that they are oppressed, too, by “sex roles.” But that barrier is erected and maintained by men, for the benefit of men. It consists of cultural and economic forces and pressures in a culture and economy controlled by men in which, at every economic level and in all racial and ethnic subcultures, economy, tradition—and even ideologies of liberation—work to keep at least local culture and economy in male control.*...
*Of course this is complicated by race and class. Machismo and "Black manhood" politics seem to help keep Latin or Black men in control of more cash than Latin or Black women control; but these politics seem to me also to ultimately help keep the larger economy in white male control.
The Possessive Investment in Whiteness
Racialized Social Democracy and the
"White" Problem in American Studies

George Lipsitz

Shortly after World War II, a French reporter asked expatriate Richard Wright his opinion about the "Negro problem" in the United States. The author replied "There isn't any Negro problem; there is only a white problem."1 By inverting the reporter's question, Wright called attention to its hidden assumptions—that racial polarization comes from the existence of blacks rather than from the behavior of whites, that black people are a "problem" for whites rather than fellow citizens entitled to justice, and that unless otherwise specified, "Americans" means whites.2 But Wright's formulation also placed political mobilization by African Americans in context, attributing it to the systemic practices of aversion, exploitation, denigration, and discrimination practiced by people who think of themselves as "white."

Whiteness is everywhere in American culture, but it is very hard to see. As Richard Dyer argues, "white power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular."3 As the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations.4 To identify, analyze, and oppose the destructive consequences of whiteness, we need what Walter Benjamin called "presence of mind." Benjamin wrote that people visit fortune-tellers not so much out of a desire to know the future but rather out of a fear of not noticing some important aspect of the present. "Presence of mind," he argued, "is an abstract of the future, and precise awareness of the present moment more decisive than foreknowledge of the most distant events."5 In our society at this time, precise awareness of the present moment requires an understanding of the existence and the destructive consequences of "white" identity.

In recent years, an important body of American studies scholarship has started to explore the role played by cultural practices in creating "whiteness" in the United States. More than the product of private prejudices, whiteness emerged as a relevant category in American life largely because of realities created by slavery and segregation, by immigration restriction and Indian policy, by conquest and colonialism. A fictive identity of "whiteness" appeared in law as an abstraction, and it became actualized in everyday life in many ways. American economic and political life gave different racial groups unequal access to citizenship and property, while cultural practices including wild west shows, minstrel shows, racist images in advertising, and Hollywood films institutionalized racism by uniting ethnically diverse European-American audiences into an imagined community—one called into being through inscribed appeals to the solidarity of white supremacy.6 Although cross-ethnic identification and pan-ethnic antiracism in culture, politics, and economics have often interrupted and resisted racialized white supremacist notions of American identity, from colonial days to the present, successful political coalitions serving dominant interests have often relied on exclusionary concepts of whiteness to fuse unity among otherwise antagonistic individuals and groups.7
Yet, while cultural expressions have played an important role in the construction of white supremacist political alliances, the reverse is also true (i.e., political activity has also played a constitutive role in racializing U.S. culture). Race is a cultural construct, but one with sinister structural causes and consequences. Conscious and deliberate actions have institutionalized group identity in the United States, not just through the dissemination of cultural stories but also through systematic efforts from colonial times to the present to create a possessive investment in whiteness for European Americans. Studies of culture too far removed from studies of social structure leave us with inadequate explanations for understanding racism and inadequate remedies for combatting it.

From the start, European settlers in North America established structures encouraging possessive investment in whiteness. The colonial and early-nation legal systems authorized attacks on Native Americans and encouraged the appropriation of their lands. They legitimated racialized chattel slavery, restricted naturalized citizenship to “white” immigrants, and provided pretexts for exploiting labor, seizing property, and denying the franchise to Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans. Slavery and “Jim Crow” segregation institutionalized possessive identification with whiteness visibly and openly, but an elaborate interaction of largely covert public and private decisions during and after the days of slavery and segregation also produced a powerful legacy with enduring effects on the racialization of experience, opportunities, and rewards in the United States possessive investment in whiteness pervades public policy in the United States past and present—not just long ago during slavery and segregation but in the recent past and present as well—through the covert but no less systematic racism inscribed within U.S. social democracy.

Even though there has always been racism in American history, it has not always been the same racism. Political and cultural struggles over power shape the contours and dimensions of racism in any era. Mass mobilizations against racism during the Civil War and civil rights eras meaningfully curtailed the reach and scope of white supremacy, but in each case reactionary forces then engineered a renewal of racism, albeit in new forms, during successive decades. Racism changes over time, taking on different forms and serving different social purposes in different eras.

Contemporary racism is not just a residual consequence of slavery and de jure segregation but rather something that has been created anew in our own time by many factors including the putatively race-neutral liberal social democratic reforms of the past five decades. Despite hard-fought battles for change that secured important concessions during the 1960s in the form of civil rights legislation, the racialized nature of social democratic policies in the United States since the Great Depression has, in my judgment, actually increased the possessive investment in whiteness among European Americans over the past half-century.

The possessive investment in whiteness is not a simple matter of black and white; all racialized minority groups have suffered from it, albeit to different degrees and in different ways. Most of my argument here addresses relations between European Americans and African Americans because they contain many of the most vivid oppositions and contrasts, but the possessive investment in whiteness always emerges from a fused sensibility drawing on many sources at once—on antiblack racism to be sure, but also on the legacies of racialization left by federal, state, and local policies toward Native Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and other groups designated by whites as “racially other.”
During the New Deal, both the Wagner Act and the Social Security Act excluded farm workers and domestics from coverage, effectively denying those disproportionately minority sectors of the work force protections and benefits routinely channeled to whites. The Federal Housing Act of 1934 brought home ownership within reach of millions of citizens by placing the credit of the federal government behind private lending to home buyers, but overtly racist categories In the Federal Housing Administration’s (FHA’s) “confidential” city surveys and appraisers’ manuals channeled almost all of the loan money toward whites and away from communities of color. \textsuperscript{5} In the post–World War II era, trade unions negotiated contract provisions giving private medical insurance, pensions, and job security largely to the mostly white workers in unionized mass-production industries rather than fighting for full employment, universal medical care, and old age pensions for all or for an end to discriminatory hiring and promotion practices by employers. \textsuperscript{9}

Each of these policies widened the gap between the resources available to whites and those available to aggrieved racial communities, but the most damaging long-term effects may well have come from the impact of the racial discrimination codified by the policies of the FHA. By channeling loans away from older inner-city neighborhoods and toward white home buyers moving into segregated suburbs, the FHA and private lenders after World War II aided and abetted the growth and development of increased segregation in U.S. residential neighborhoods. For example, FHA appraisers denied federally supported loans to prospective home buyers in the racially mixed Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles because it was a “‘melting pot’ area literally honeycombed with diverse and subversive racial elements.” \textsuperscript{10} Similarly, mostly white St. Louis County secured five times as many FHA mortgages as the more racially mixed city of St. Louis between 1943 and 1960. Home buyers in the county received six times as much loan money and enjoyed per capita mortgage spending 6.3 times greater than those in the city. \textsuperscript{11}

In concert with FHA support for segregation in the suburbs, federal and state tax monies routinely provided water supplies and sewage facilities for racially exclusive suburban communities in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1960s, these areas often incorporated themselves as independent municipalities in order to gain greater access to federal funds allocated for “urban aid.” \textsuperscript{12} At the same time that FHA loans and federal highway building projects subsidized the growth of segregated suburbs, urban renewal programs in cities throughout the country devastated minority neighborhoods.

During the 1950s and 1960s, federally assisted urban renewal projects destroyed 20 percent of the central city housing units occupied by blacks, as opposed to only 10 percent of those inhabited by whites. \textsuperscript{13} Even after most major urban renewal programs had been completed in the 1970s, black central city residents continued to lose housing units at a rate equal to 80 percent of what had been lost in the 1960s. Yet white displacement declined back to the relatively low levels of the 1950s. \textsuperscript{14} In addition, the refusal first to pass, then to enforce, fair housing laws, has enabled realtors, buyers, and sellers to profit from racist collusion against minorities without fear of legal retribution.

During the decades following World War II, urban renewal helped construct a new “white” identity in the suburbs by helping destroy ethnically specific European-American urban inner-city neighborhoods. Wrecking balls and bulldozers eliminated some of these sites, while others became transformed by an influx of minority residents desperately competing for a declining number of affordable housing units. As increasing numbers of racial minorities moved into cities, increasing numbers of European-American ethnicities moved out. Consequently, ethnic differences among whites became a less important dividing line in American culture, while race became more important. The suburbs helped turn European Americans into “whites” who
could live near each other and intermarry with relatively little difficulty. But this "white" unity rested on residential segregation and on shared access to housing and life chances largely unavailable to communities of color.15

Federally funded highways designed to connect suburban commuters with downtown places of employment destroyed already scarce housing in minority communities and often disrupted neighborhood life as well. Construction of the Harbor Freeway in Los Angeles, the Gulf Freeway in Houston, and the Mark Twain Freeway in St. Louis displaced thousands of residents and bisected previously connected neighborhoods, shopping districts, and political precincts. The process of urban renewal and highway construction set in motion a vicious cycle: population loss led to decreased political power, which made minority neighborhoods more likely to be victimized by further urban renewal and freeway construction, not to mention more susceptible to the placement of prisons, waste dumps, and other projects that further depopulated these areas.

In Houston, Texas—where blacks make up slightly more than one-quarter of the local population—more than 75 percent of municipal garbage incinerators and 100 percent of the city-owned garbage dumps are located in black neighborhoods.16 A 1992 study by staff writers for the National Law Journal examined the Environmental Protection Agency's response to 1,177 toxic waste cases and found that polluters of sites near the greatest white population received penalties 500 percent higher than penalties imposed on polluters in minority areas—an average of $335,566 for white areas contrasted with $55,318 for minority areas. Income did not account for these differences—penalties for low-income areas on average actually exceeded those for areas with the highest median incomes by about 3 percent. The penalties for violating all federal environmental laws about air, water, and waste pollution in minority communities were 46 percent lower than in white communities. In addition, Superfund remedies left minority communities with longer waiting times for being placed on the national priority list, cleanups that begin from 12 to 42 percent later than at white sites, and a 7 percent greater likelihood of "containment" (wallowing off a hazardous site) than cleanup, while white sites experienced treatment and cleanup 22 percent more often than containment.17

When housing prices doubled during the 1970s, white homeowners who had been able to take advantage of discriminatory FHA financing policies received increased equity in their homes, while those excluded from the housing market by earlier policies found themselves facing higher costs of entry into the market in addition to the traditional obstacles presented by the discriminatory practices of sellers, realtors, and lenders. The contrast between European Americans and African Americans is instructive in this regard. Because whites have access to broader housing choices than blacks, whites pay 15 percent less than blacks for similar housing in the same neighborhood. White neighborhoods typically experience housing costs 25 percent less expensive than would be the case if the residents were black.18

A recent Federal Reserve Bank of Boston study showed that minority applicants had a 60 percent greater chance of being denied home loans than white applicants with the same credit-worthiness. Boston bankers made 2.9 times as many mortgage loans per one thousand housing units in neighborhoods inhabited by low-income whites than they did to neighborhoods populated by low-income blacks.19 In addition, loan officers were far more likely to overlook flaws in the credit records of white applicants or to arrange creative financing for them than they were with black applicants.20

A Los Angeles study found that loan officers more frequently used dividend income and underlying assets as criteria for judging black applicants than they did for whites.21 In Houston, the NCBN Bank of Texas disqualified
13 percent of middle-income white loan applicants but disqualified 36 percent of middle-income black applicants. Atlanta's home loan institutions gave five times as many home loans to whites as to blacks in the late 1980s. An analysis of sixteen Atlanta neighborhoods found that home buyers in white neighborhoods received conventional financing four times as often as those in black sections of the city. Nationwide, financial institutions get more money in deposits from black neighborhoods than they invest in them in the form of home mortgage loans, making home lending a vehicle for the transfer of capital away from black savers and toward white investors. In many locations, high-income blacks were denied loans more often than low-income whites.

Federal home loan policies have placed the power of the federal government behind private discrimination. Urban renewal and highway construction programs have enhanced the possessive investment in whiteness through government initiatives. In addition, decisions about the location of federal jobs have also systematically supported the subsidy for whiteness. Federal civilian employment dropped by 41,419 in central cities between 1966 and 1973, but total federal employment in metropolitan areas grew by 26,558. While one might naturally expect the location of government buildings that serve the public to follow population trends, the federal government's policies in locating offices and records centers in suburbs helped aggravate the flight of jobs to suburban locations less accessible to inner-city residents. Since racial discrimination in the private sector forces minority workers to seek government positions disproportionate to their numbers, these moves exact particular hardships on them. In addition, minorities who follow their jobs to the suburbs generally encounter increased commuter costs because housing discrimination makes it harder and more expensive for them to relocate than for whites.

The racialized aspects of fifty years of these social democratic policies became greatly exacerbated by the anti-social democratic policies of neoconservatives in the Reagan and Bush administrations during the 1980s and 1990s. They clearly contributed to the reinforcement of possessive investments in whiteness through their regressive policies in respect to federal aid to education and their refusal to challenge segregated education, housing, and hiring, as well as their cynical cultivation of an antiblack, counter-subversive consensus through attacks on affirmative action and voting rights legislation. In the U.S. economy, where 86 percent of available jobs do not appear in classified advertisements and where personal connections provide the most important factor in securing employment, attacks on affirmative action guarantee that whites will be rewarded for their historical advantages in the labor market rather than for their individual abilities or efforts.

Yet even seemingly race-neutral policies supported by both neoconservatives and social democrats in the 1980s and 1990s have also increased the absolute value of being white. In the 1980s, changes in federal tax laws decreased the value of wage income and increased the value of investment income—owing harmful to minorities who suffer from an even greater gap between their total wealth and that of whites than in the disparity between their income and white income. Failure to raise the minimum wage between 1981 and 1989 and the more than one-third decline in value of Aid for Families with Dependent Children payments hurt all poor people, but they exacted special costs on nonwhites facing even more constricted markets for employment, housing, and education than poor whites.

Because they are ignorant of even the recent history of the possessive investment in whiteness—generated by slavery and segregation but augmented by social democratic reform—Americans produce largely cultural explanations for structural social problems. The increased possessive invest-
ment in whiteness generated by dis-investment in American’s cities, factories, and schools since the 1970s disguises the general problems posed to our society by deindustrialization, economic restructuring, and neoconservative attacks on the welfare state as racial problems. It fuels a discourse that demonizes people of color for being victimized by these changes, while hiding the privileges of whiteness by attributing them to family values, fatherhood, and foresight—rather than to favoritism.29 Many recent popular and scholarly studies have explained clearly the causes for black economic decline over the past two decades.29 Deindustrialization has decimated the industrial infrastructure that formerly provided high-wage jobs and chances for upward mobility to black workers. Neoconservative attacks on government spending for public housing, health, education, and transportation have deprived African Americans of needed services and opportunities for jobs in the public sector. A massive retreat from responsibility to enforce antidiscrimination laws at the highest levels of government has sanctioned pervasive overt and covert racial discrimination by bankers, realtors, and employers.

Yet public opinion polls conducted among white Americans display little recognition of these devastating changes. Seventy percent of whites in one poll said that African Americans "have the same opportunities to live a middle-class life as whites."30 Nearly three-fourths of white respondents to a 1989 poll believed that opportunities for blacks had improved during the Reagan presidency.31

It is my contention that the stark contrast between black experiences and white opinions during the past two decades cannot be attributed solely to ignorance or intolerance on the part of individuals but stems instead from the overdetermined inadequacy of the language of liberal individualism to describe collective experience.32 As long as we define social life as the sum total of conscious and deliberate individual activities, then only individual manifestations of personal prejudice and hostility will be seen as racist. Systemic, collective, and coordinated behavior disappears from sight. Collective exercises of group power relentlessly channeling rewards, resources, and opportunities from one group to another will not appear to be "racist" from this perspective because they rarely announce their intention to discriminate against individuals. But they work to construct racial identities by giving people of different races vastly different life chances.

The gap between white perceptions and minority experiences can have explosive consequences. Little more than a year after the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, a sixteen-year-old high school junior shared her opinions with a reporter from the Los Angeles Times. "I don’t think white people owe anything to black people," she explained. "We didn’t sell them into slavery; it was our ancestors. What they did was wrong, but we’ve done our best to make up for it."33 A seventeen-year-old senior echoed those comments, telling the reporter:

I feel we spend more time in my history class talking about what whites owe blacks than just about anything else when the issue of slavery comes up. I often received dirty looks. This seems strange given that I wasn’t even alive then. And the few members of my family from that time didn’t have the luxury of owning much, let alone slaves. So why, I ask you, am I constantly made to feel guilty?34

More ominously, after pleading guilty to bombing two homes and one car, to vandalizing a synagogue, and attempting to start a race war by murdering Rodney King and bombing Los Angeles’s First African Methodist
Episcopal Church, twenty-year-old Christopher David Fisher explained that "sometimes whites were picked on because of the color of their skin. . . . Maybe we're blamed for slavery." Fisher's actions were certainly extreme, but his justification of them drew knowingly and precisely on a broadly shared narrative about the victimization of innocent whites by irrational and ungrateful minorities.

The comments and questions raised about the legacy of slavery by these young whites illumine broader currents in our culture that have enormous implications for understanding the enduring significance of race in our country. These young people associate black grievances solely with slavery, and they express irritation at what they perceive as efforts to make them feel guilty or unduly privileged in the present because of things that happened in the distant past. Because their own ancestors may not have been slave owners or because "we've done our best to make up for it," they feel that it is unreasonable for anyone to view them as people who owe "anything" to blacks. On the contrary, Fisher felt that his discomfort with being "picked on" and "blamed" for slavery gave him good reason to bomb homes, deface synagogues, and plot to kill black people.

Unfortunately for our society, these young whites accurately reflect the logic of the language of liberal individualism and its ideological predispositions in discussions of race. They seem to have no knowledge of the disciplined, systemic, and collective group activity that has structured white identities in American history. They are not alone in their ignorance; in a 1979 law journal article, future Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia argued that affirmative action "is based upon concepts of racial indebtedness and racial entitlement rather than individual worth and individual need" and is thus "racist." Group interests are not monolithic, and aggregate figures can obscure serious differences within racial groups. All whites do not benefit from the possessive investment in whiteness in precisely the same way; the experiences of members of minority groups are not interchangeable. But the possessive investment in whiteness always affects individual and group life chances and opportunities. Even in cases where minority groups secure political and economic power through collective mobilization, the terms and conditions of their collectivity and the logic of group solidarity are always influenced and intensified by the absolute value of whiteness in American politics, economics, and culture.

In the 1960s, members of the Black Panther Party used to say that "if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." But those of us who are "white" can only become part of the solution if we recognize the degree to which we are already part of the problem—not because of our race, but because of our possessive investment in it. Neither conservative "free market" policies nor liberal social democratic reforms can solve the "white problem" in America because both of them reinforce the possessive investment in whiteness. But an explicitly antiracist pan-ethnic movement that acknowledges the existence and power of whiteness might make some important changes. Pan-ethnic, antiracist coalitions have a long history in the United States—in the political activism of John Brown, Sojourner Truth, and the Magon brothers, among others—but we also have a rich cultural tradition of pan-ethnic antiracism connected to civil rights activism of the kind detailed so brilliantly in rhythm and blues musician Johnny Otis's recent book, *Upside Your Head! Rhythm and Blues on Central Avenue.* These efforts by whites to fight racism, not out of sympathy for someone else but out of a sense of self-respect and simple justice, have never completely disappeared; they remain available as models for the present.
Walter Benjamin's praise for "presence of mind" came from his understanding of how difficult it may be to see the present. But more important, he called for presence of mind as the means for implementing what he called "the only true telepathic miracle"—turning the forbidding future into the fulfilled present. Failure to acknowledge our society's possessive investment in whiteness prevents us from facing the present openly and honestly. It hides from us the devastating costs of disinvestment in America's infrastructure over the past two decades and keeps us from facing our responsibilities to reinvest in human capital by channeling resources toward education, health, and housing—and away from subsidies for speculation and luxury. After two decades of disinvestment, the only further disinvestment we need is to disinvest in the ruinous pathology of whiteness that has always undermined our own best instincts and interests. In a society suffering so badly from an absence of mutuality, an absence of responsibility, and an absence of simple justice, presence of mind might be just what we need.

NOTES
1. Raphael Tardon, "Richard Wright Tells Us: The White Problem in the United States," Action, 24 Oct. 1946. Reprinted in Kenneth Kinnaman and Michel Fabre, Conversations with Richard Wright (Jackson, Miss., 1993), 99. Malcolm X and others used this same formulation in the 1960s, but I believe that it originated with Wright, or at least that is the earliest citation I have found so far.
2. This is also Toni Morrison's point in Playing in the Dark: Whiteness in the Literary Imagination (Cambridge, Mass., 1992).
4. I thank Michael Schudson for pointing out to me that since the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s whiteness dares not speak its name, cannot speak in its own behalf, but rather advances through a color-blind language radically at odds with the distinctly racialized distribution of resources and life chances in American society.
9. I thank Phil Ethington for pointing out to me that these aspects of New Deal policies emerged out of political negotiations between the segregationist Dixicrats and liberals from the north and west. My perspective is that white supremacy was not a gnawing aberration within the New Deal coalition but rather an essential point of unity between southern whites and northern white ethnics.
13. Ibid., 114.
14. Ibid., 130.
31. Ibid., 206.
32. I borrow the term "overdetermination" here from Louis Althusser, who uses it to show how dominant ideologies become credible to people in part because various institutions and agencies independently replicate them and reinforce their social power.
34. Ibid.
37. The rise of a black middle class and the setbacks suffered by white workers during deindustrialization may seem to subvert the analysis presented here. Yet the black middle class remains fragile, far less able than other middle-class groups to translate advances in income into advances in wealth and power. Similarly, the success of neconservatism since the 1970s has rested on securing support from white workers for economic policies that do them objective harm by mobilizing counter-subversive electoral coalitions against busing and affirmative action, while carrying out attacks on public institutions and resources by representing "public" space and black space. See Oliver and Shapiro, "Wealth of a Nation." See also Logan and Harvey, *Urban Fortunes*.
39. Mobilizations against plant shutdowns, for environmental protection, against cutbacks in education spending, and for reproductive rights all contain the po-
tential for pan-ethnic antiracist organizing, but, too often, neglect of race as a central modality for how issues of employment, pollution, education, or reproductive rights are experienced isolates these social movements from their broadest possible base.

Discrimination Today

Richard T. Schaefer

Dateline NBC in August 1998 sent two young men, one Black and the other White, to shopping malls. They looked at merchandise in Eddie Bauer, Timberland, and other stores. Consistently, the Black shopper was tailed by in-store security. Often the guards, many of whom were themselves Black, left their assigned posts at the front of the store to follow the Black shopper. Confronted with the differential treatment of their customers, store executives indicated that they gave no instructions to follow Black customers closely. White viewers were surprised by what they saw, but Black viewers generally saw little new to them in the report. Discrimination may take many forms and surface because of specific procedures or feelings of distrust (NBC News 1998).

Discrimination is widespread in the United States. It sometimes results from prejudices held by individuals. More significantly, it is found in institutional discrimination and the presence of the informal economy. The presence of an underclass is symptomatic of many social forces, and total discrimination—past and present discrimination taken together—is one of them.

MEASURING DISCRIMINATION

How much discrimination is there? As in measuring prejudice, problems arise in quantifying discrimination. Measuring prejudice is hampered by the difficulties in assessing attitudes and by the need to take many factors into account. It is further limited by the initial challenge of identifying different treatment. A second difficulty of measuring discrimination is assigning a cost to the discrimination.

Some tentative conclusions about discrimination can be made, however. Figure 3.2 uses income data to show vividly the disparity in income between African Americans and Whites, men and women. The first comparison is of all workers. White men, with a median income of $43,525, earn almost 35 percent more than Black men and nearly twice what Hispanic women earn in wages.

Clearly, White men earn most, followed by Black men, White women, Hispanic men, and Hispanic women. The sharpest drop is between White and Black men. Even worse, relatively speaking, is the plight of women. Double jeopardy refers to the combination of two subordinate statuses, defined as experienced by women of color. This disparity between Black women and White men has remained unchanged over the more than 50 years during which such data have been tabulated. It illustrates yet another instance of the double jeopardy experienced by minority women. Also, Figure 3.2 includes only data for full-time, year-round workers; it excludes homemakers and the unemployed. Even in this comparison, the deprivation of Blacks, Hispanics, and women is confirmed again.

Are these differences entirely the result of discrimination in employment? No, individuals within the four groups are not equally prepared to compete for high-paying jobs. Past discrimination is a significant factor in a person’s present social position. As discussed previously and illustrated in Figure 3.1, past discrimination continues to take its toll on modern victims. Taxpayers, predominantly White, were unwilling to subsidize the public education of African Americans and Hispanics at the same levels
FIGURE 3.2  Median Income by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, 2001.

Even at the very highest levels of schooling, the income gap remains between Whites and Blacks. Education also has little apparent effect on the income gap between male and female workers. Even a brief analysis reveals striking differences in earning power between White men and other groups in the United States. Furthermore, the double jeopardy is apparent for African American and Hispanic women.

Note: Median income is from all sources and is limited to year-round, full-time workers over 25 years old. Data are for non-Hispanic males.
Source: Bureau of the Census 2002c: parts 76-80, 148-150.

as White pupils. Even as these actions have changed, today's schools show the continuing results of this uneven spending pattern from the past. Education clearly is an appropriate variable to control.

In Table 3.1, median income is compared, holding education constant, which means that we can compare Blacks and Whites and men and women with approximately the same amount of formal schooling. More education means more money, but the disparity remains. The gap between races does narrow somewhat as education increases. However, both African Americans and women lag behind their more affluent counterparts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>$58,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>32,300</td>
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<td>Nongraduate</td>
<td>47,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>57,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>81,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>53,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Figures are median income from all sources except capital gain. Included are public assistance payments, dividends, pensions, unemployment compensation, and so on. Incomes are for all workers over 25 years of age. High school graduates include those with GEDs. Data for Whites are for White non-Hispanics. "Some college" excludes associate degree holders.


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The contrast remains dramatic: women with a master's degree ($48,276) earn $5,000 less than men who complete only a bachelor's degree.

What do these individual differences look like if we consider them on a national level? Economist Andrew Brimmer (1995), citing numerous government studies, estimates that about 3 or 4 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP, or the value of goods and services) is lost annually by the failure to use African Americans' existing education. There had been little change in this economic cost from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s. This estimate would be even higher if we took into account economic losses caused by the underuse of the academic talents of women and other minorities.

Now that education has been held constant, is the remaining gap caused by discrimination? No, not necessarily. Table 3.1 uses only the amount of schooling, not its quality. Racial minorities are more likely to attend inadequately financed schools. Some efforts have been made to eliminate disparities between school districts in the amount of wealth available to tax for school support, but with little success. The inequality of educational opportunity may seem less important in explaining sex discrimination. Although women usually are not segregated from men, educational institutions encourage talented women to enter fields that pay less (nursing or elementary education) than occupations requiring similar amounts of training.

ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION

Two main agents of social change work to reduce discrimination: voluntary associations organized to solve racial and ethnic problems and the federal government, including the courts. The two are closely related: most efforts initiated by the government were urged by associations or organizations representing minority groups, following vigorous protests against racism by African Americans. Resistance to social inequality by subordinate groups has been the key to change. Rarely has any government of its own initiative sought to end discrimination based on such criteria as race, ethnicity, and gender.

All racial and ethnic groups of any size are represented by private organizations that are to some degree trying to end discrimination. Some groups originated in the first half of the twentieth century, but most have been founded since World War II or have become significant forces in bringing about change only since then. These include church organizations, fraternal social groups, minor political parties, and legal defense funds, as well as more militant organizations operating under the scrutiny of law enforcement agencies. The purposes, membership, successes, and failures of these resistance organizations dedicated to eliminating discrimination are discussed throughout this book.

Government action toward eliminating discrimination is also recent. Antidiscrimination actions have been taken by each branch of the government: the executive, the judicial, and the legislative.

The first antidiscrimination action at the executive level was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1943 creation of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), which handled thousands of complaints of discrimination, mostly from African Americans, despite strong opposition by powerful economic and political leaders and many southern Whites. The FEPC had little actual power. It had no authority to compel employers to stop discriminating but could only ask for voluntary compliance. Its jurisdiction was limited to federal government employees, federal contractors, and labor unions. State and local governments and any business without a federal contract were not covered. Furthermore, the FEPC never enjoyed vigorous support from the White House, was denied adequate funds, and was part of larger agencies that were hostile to the commission's existence. This weak antidiscrimination agency was finally dropped in 1946, to be succeeded by an even weaker one in 1948.

The judiciary, charged with interpreting laws and the U.S. Constitution, has a much longer history of involvement in the rights of racial, ethnic, and religious mi-
norities. However, its early decisions protected the rights of the dominant group, as in the 1857 U.S. Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision, which ruled that slaves remained slaves even when living or traveling in states where slavery was illegal. Not until the 1940s did the Supreme Court revise earlier decisions and begin to grant African Americans the same rights as those held by Whites. The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which stated that "separate but equal" facilities, including education, were unconstitutional, heralded a new series of rulings, arguing that distinguishing between races in order to segregate was inherently unconstitutional.

It was assumed incorrectly by many that *Brown* and other judicial actions would lead quickly to sweeping change. In fact, little change occurred initially, and resistance to racism continued. The immediate effect of many court rulings was minimal because the executive branch and the Congress did not want to violate the principle of states' rights, which holds that each state is sovereign in most of its affairs and has the right to order them without interference from the federal government. In other words, supporters of states' rights felt that the federal government had to allow state governments to determine how soon the rights of African Americans would be protected. Gradually, U.S. society became more committed to the rights of individuals. Legislation in the 1960s committed the federal government to protecting civil rights actively rather than merely leaving action up to state and local officials.

The most important legislative effort to eradicate discrimination was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act led to the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which had the power to investigate complaints against employers and to recommend action to the Department of Justice. If the Justice Department sued and discrimination was found, the court could order appropriate compensation. The act covered employment practices of all businesses with more than twenty-five employees and nearly all employment agencies and labor unions. A 1972 amendment broadened the coverage to employers with as few as fifteen employees.

The act also prohibited different voting registration standards for White and Black voting applicants. It also prohibited discrimination in public accommodations, that is, hotels, motels, restaurants, gasoline stations, and amusement parks. Publicly owned facilities, such as parks, stadiums, and swimming pools, were also prohibited from discriminating. Another important provision forbade discrimination in all federally supported programs and institutions, such as hospitals, colleges, and road construction projects.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 covered discrimination based on race, color, creed, national origin, and sex. Although the inclusion of gender in employment criteria had been prohibited in the federal civil service since 1949, most laws and most groups pushing for change showed little concern about sex discrimination. There was little precedent for attention to sex discrimination even at the state level. Only Hawaii and Wisconsin had enacted laws against sex discrimination before 1964. As first proposed, the Civil Rights Act did not include mention of gender. One day before the final vote, opponents of the measure offered an amendment on gender bias in an effort to defeat the entire act. The act did pass with prohibition against sex bias included, an event that can only be regarded as a milestone for women seeking equal employment rights with men.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was not perfect. Since 1964, several acts and amendments to the original act have been added to cover the many areas of discrimination it left untouched, such as criminal justice and housing. Even in areas singled out for enforcement in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination still occurs. Federal agencies charged with its enforcement complain that they are underfunded or are denied wholehearted support by the White House. Also, regardless of how much the EEOC may want to act in a case, the person who alleges discrimination has to pursue the complaint over a long time, marked by long periods of inaction.
A home is the typical family's most important financial asset and the most important means of transmitting wealth from generation to generation. Historically, minority homebuyers found themselves unable to secure home loans. Lenders circled areas on a city map in red pencil (hence the term redlining) that they regarded as too insecure to grant mortgages. If loans were granted in redlined neighborhoods, interest rates were much higher, and greater demands were made on the family to prove its financial ability to maintain payments. These neighborhoods were almost always minority residential areas and, because of racial segregation, the areas in which African Americans and other minority buyers were most able to find housing open to them. Legislation now prevents such explicit forms of racial bias, but does redlining persist in a more subtle fashion?

Research finds that in twenty-five metropolitan areas, housing agents showed fewer housing units to Blacks and Latinos, steered them to minority neighborhoods, and gave them far less assistance in finding housing that met their needs. Other recent studies reveal that lenders are more likely to turn down a mortgage request from a minority applicant than from an equally qualified White and that lenders give minority applicants far less assistance in filling out their forms.

Successful African American homebuyers find that they receive less for their homes. Controlling for a variety of factors except race of neighborhood, Black homeowners received 18 percent less value for their homes than White homeowners. The Brookings Institution has called this the "segregation tax," the price Blacks pay for living in all-Black neighborhoods.

The concept of redlining is now being applied to areas other than homebuying. People living in predominantly minority neighborhoods have found that service deliverers refuse to go to their area. In one case that attracted national attention, in 1997 Kansas City's Pizza Hut refused to deliver forty pizzas to an honor program at a high school in an all-Black neighborhood. A Pizza Hut spokesperson called the neighborhood unsafe and said that almost every city has "restricted areas" to which the company will not deliver. This admission was particularly embarrassing because the high school already had a $170,000-a-year contract with Pizza Hut to deliver pizzas as a part of their school lunch program.

Service redlining covers everything from parcel deliveries to repair people as well as food deliveries. The red pencil appears not be have been set aside in cities throughout the United States.


Despite these efforts, devastating forms of discrimination persist. African Americans, Latinos, and others fall victims of redlining. Redlining is the pattern of discrimination against people trying to buy homes in minority and racially changing neighborhoods. In "Research Focus" we consider the extent of redlining today.

Although civil rights laws often have established rights for other minorities, the Supreme Court made them explicit in two 1987 decisions involving groups other than African Americans. In the first of the two cases, an Iraqi American professor asserted that he had been denied tenure because of his Arab origins; in the second, a Jewish congregation brought suit for damages in response to the defacement of its synagogue with derogatory symbols. The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that, in effect, any member of an ethnic minority may sue under federal prohibitions against discrimina-
tion. These decisions paved the way for almost all racial and ethnic groups to invoke the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Taylor 1987).

A particularly insulting form of discrimination seemed finally to be on its way out in the late 1980s. Many social clubs had limitations forbidding membership to minorities, Jews, and women. For years, exclusive clubs argued that they were merely selecting friends, but in fact, a principal function of these clubs is as a forum to transact business. Denial of membership meant more than the inability to attend a luncheon; it also seemed to exclude one from part of the marketplace, as Lawrence Otis Graham observed at the beginning of this chapter. The Supreme Court ruled unanimously in the 1988 case New York State Clubs Association v. City of New York that states and cities may ban sex discrimination by large private clubs where business lunches and similar activities take place. Although the ruling does not apply to all clubs and leaves the issue of racial and ethnic barriers unresolved, it did chip away at the arbitrary exclusiveness of private groups (Taylor 1988).

Memberships and restrictive organizations remain perfectly legal. The rise to national attention as professional golfer Tiger Woods, of mixed Native American, African, and Asian ancestry, made the public aware that there were at least twenty-three golf courses he would be prohibited from playing by virtue of race. In 2002, women’s groups tried unsuccessfully to have the golf champion speak out as the Master’s and British Open played on courses closed to women as members (Kuczynski 2002; McCormick and Begley 1996; Yu 1996).

The inability of the Civil Rights Act, similar legislation, and court decisions to end discrimination does not result entirely from poor financial and political support, although they played a role. The number of federal employees assigned to investigate and prosecute bias cases is insufficient. Many discriminatory practices, such as those described as institutional discrimination, are seldom subject to legal action.

Environmental Justice

Discrimination takes many forms and is not necessarily apparent even when its impact can be far-reaching. Take the example of Kennedy Heights, a well-kept working-class neighborhood nestled in southeastern Houston. This community faces a real threat, and it is not from crime or drugs. The threat they fear is under their feet, in the form of three oil pits abandoned by Gulf Oil back in 1927. The residents, most of whom are African American, argue that they have suffered high rates of cancer, lupus, and other illnesses because the chemicals from the oil fields poison their water supply. The residents first sued Chevron USA back in 1985, and the case is still making its way through the courtrooms of no less than six states and the federal judiciary.

Lawyers and other representatives for the residents say that the oil company is guilty of environmental racism because it knowingly allowed a predominantly Black housing development to be built on the contaminated land. They are able to support this charge with documents, including a 1954 memorandum from an appraiser who suggested that the oil pits be drained of any toxic substances and the land filled for “low-cost houses for White occupancy.” When the land did not sell right away, an oil company official in a 1967 memorandum suggested a tax-free land exchange with a developer who intended to use the land for “Negro residents and commercial development.” For this latter intended use by African Americans, there was no mention of environmental cleanup of the land. The oil company counters that it just assumed the developer would do the necessary cleanup of the pits (Manning 1997; Verhoeck 1997).

The conflict perspective sees the case of the Houston suburb as one where pollution harms minority groups disproportionately. Environmental justice refers to the efforts to ensure that hazardous substances are controlled so that all communities receive protection regardless of race or socioeconomic circumstance. After Environmental Protection Agency and other organizations documented discrimination in the
looting of hazardous waste sites, an Executive Order was issued in 1994 that requires all federal agencies to ensure that low-income and minority communities have access to better information about their environment and have an opportunity to participate in shaping government policies that affect their community's health. Initial efforts to implement the policy have met widespread opposition, including criticism from some proponents of economic development who argue that the guidelines unnecessarily delay or block altogether locating new industrial sites.

Sociologist Robert Bullard (1990) has shown that low-income communities and areas with significant minority populations are more likely to be adjacent to waste sites than are affluent White communities. Undergraduate student researchers at Occidental College in California found in 1995 that the poor, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans were especially likely to be living near Los Angeles County's 82 potential environmental hazards. Another study in 2001 also showed the higher probability that people of color live closer to sources of air pollution. People of color jeopardized by environmental problems also lack the resources and political muscle to do something about it (Institute of Medicine 1999; Moffat 1995; Polakovic 2001).

Issues of environmental justice are not limited to metropolitan areas. Another continuing problem is abuse of Native American reservation land. Many American Indian leaders are concerned that tribal lands are too often regarded as dumping grounds for toxic waste that go to the highest bidder. We will return to this aspect of environmental justice in Chapter 6.

As with other aspects of discrimination, experts disagree. There is controversy within the scientific community over the potential hazards of some of the problems, and there is even some opposition within the subordinate communities being affected. This complexity of the issues in terms of social class and race is apparent, as some observers question the wisdom of an Executive Order that slows economic development coming to areas in dire need of employment opportunities. On the other hand, some counter that such businesses typically employ few less-skilled workers and only make the environment less livable for those left behind. Despite such varying viewpoints, environmental justice is an excellent example of resistance and change in the 1990s that could not have been foreseen by the civil rights workers of the 1950s.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is the positive effort to recruit subordinate-group members, including women, for jobs, promotions, and educational opportunities. The phrase affirmative action first appeared in an Executive Order issued by President Kennedy in 1961. The order called for contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." However, at this early time no enforcement procedures were specified. Six years later, the order was amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, but affirmative action was still defined vaguely.

Today affirmative action has become a catch-all term for racial preference programs and goals. It has also become a lightning rod for opposition to any programs that suggest special consideration of women or racial minorities.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EXPLAINED

Affirmative action has been viewed as an important tool for reducing institutional discrimination. Whereas previous efforts were aimed at eliminating individual acts of discrimination, federal measures under the heading of affirmative action have been aimed at procedures that deny equal opportunities even if they are not intended to be overtly discriminatory. This policy has been implemented to deal with both the current discrimination and the past discrimination outlined earlier in this chapter.
Affirmative action had been aimed at institutional discrimination in such areas as

- Height and weight requirements that are unnecessarily geared to the physical proportions of White men without regard to the actual characteristics needed to perform the job and therefore exclude women and some minorities.
- Seniority rules, when applied to jobs historically held only by White men, that make more recently hired minorities and females more subject to layoff—the “last hired, first fired” employee—and less eligible for advancement.
- Nepotism-based membership policies of some unions that exclude those who are not relatives of members, who, because of past employment practices, are usually White.
- Restrictive employment leave policies, coupled with prohibitions on part-time work or denials of fringe benefits to part-time workers, which make it difficult for the heads of single-parent families, most of whom are women, to get and keep jobs and also meet the needs of their families.
- Rules requiring that only English be spoken at the workplace, even when not a business necessity, which result in discriminatory employment practices toward people whose primary language is not English.
- Standardized academic tests or criteria geared to the cultural and educational norms of middle-class or White men when these are not relevant predictors of successful job performance.
- Preferences shown by law and medical schools in admitting children of wealthy and influential alumni, nearly all of whom are White.
- Credit policies of banks and lending institutions that prevent the granting of mortgages and loans in minority neighborhoods or prevent the granting of credit to married women and others who have previously been denied the opportunity to build good credit histories in their own names.

Employers have also been cautioned against asking leading questions in interviews, such as “Did you know you would be the first Black to supervise all Whites in that factory?” or “Does your husband mind your working on weekends?” Furthermore, the lack of minority-group (Blacks, Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanics) or female employees may in itself represent evidence for a case of unlawful exclusion (Commission on Civil Rights 1981).

THE LEGAL DEBATE

How far can an employer go in encouraging women and minorities to apply for a job before it becomes unlawful discrimination against White men? Since the late 1970s, a number of bitterly debated cases on this difficult aspect of affirmative action have reached the U.S. Supreme Court. The most significant cases are summarized in Table 3.2. Furthermore, as we will see, the debate has moved into party politics.

In the 1978 Bakke case (Regents of the University of California v. Bakke), by a narrow 5–4 vote, the Court ordered the medical school of the University of California at Davis to admit Allan Bakke, a qualified White engineer who had originally been denied admission solely on the basis of his race. The justices ruled that the school had violated Bakke’s constitutional rights by establishing a fixed quota system for minority students. However, the Court added that it was constitutional for universities to adopt flexible admission programs that use race as one factor in making decisions.

Colleges and universities responded with new policies designed to meet the Bakke ruling while broadening opportunities for traditionally underrepresented minority students. However, in 1996 the Supreme Court allowed a lower court decision to stand that affirmative action programs for African American and Mexican American students at the University of Texas law school were unconstitutional. The ruling effectively prohibited schools in the lower court’s jurisdiction of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas from taking race into account in admissions. Given this action, further
### TABLE 3.2
**Key Decisions on Affirmative Action**

In a series of split and often very close decisions, the Supreme Court has expressed a variety of reservations in specific situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year to Policy</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Ruling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Griggs v. Duke Power Co.</td>
<td>9-0</td>
<td>Private employers must provide a remedy where minorities were denied opportunities even if unintentional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Regents of the University of California v. Bakke</td>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Prohibited specific number of places for minorities in college admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>United Steelworkers of America v. Weber</td>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>OK for union to favor minorities in special training programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Firefighters Local Union No. 1784 (Memphis, TN) v. Stotts</td>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>Seniority means recently hired minorities may be laid-off first in staff reductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>International Association of Firefighters v. City of Cleveland</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>Must promote minorities over more senior whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>New York City v. Sheet Metal Workers Local 33</td>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Approved specific quota of minority workers in union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>United States v. Paradise</td>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Endorsed quotas for promotions of state troopers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Johnson v. Transportation Employers' Assn.</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>Approved preference in hiring for minorities and women over better qualified men and whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>Ruled that on-site affirmative action for minority contractors unconstitutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Martin v. Wilks</td>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Ruled whites may bring reverse discrimination claims against court-approved affirmative action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Metro Broadcasting v. FCC</td>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Supported federal programs aimed at increasing minority ownership of broadcast licenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Ararand Constructors Inc. v. Peña</td>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Benefits based on race are constitutional only if narrowly defined to accomplish a compelling interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Texas v. Hopwood</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Let stand a lower court decision covering Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas that race could not be used in college admissions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision.

Challenges to affirmative action have been made with rulings specific to particular institutions. Consistently courts have found over the last 10 years that college policies that specifically use race as a significant basis for admission are unconstitutional (P. Schmidt 2001).

Even if the U.S. public acknowledges the disparity in earnings between White men and others, growing numbers of people doubt that everything done in the name of affirmative action is desirable. In 2001, national surveys showed that 58 percent thought affirmative action had been good for the country, but 35 percent felt programs should be decreased, whereas 24 percent advocated an expansion of affirmative action (Gallup 2002c).
Has affirmative action actually helped to alleviate employment inequality on the basis of race and gender? This is a difficult question to answer given the complexity of the labor market and the fact that there are other antidiscrimination measures, but it does appear that affirmative action has had significant impact in the sectors where it has been applied. Sociologist Barbara Reskin (1988) reviewed available studies looking at workforce composition in terms of race and gender in light of affirmative action policies. She found that gains in minority employment can be attributed to affirmative action policies. This includes both firms mandated to follow affirmative action guidelines and those that took them on voluntarily. There is also evidence that some earnings gains can be attributed to affirmative action. Economists M. V. Lee Badgett and Heidi Hartmann (1995), reviewing twenty-six other research studies, came to similar conclusions: affirmative action and other federal compliance programs have modest impact, but it is difficult to assess, given larger economic changes such as recessions or the rapid increase in women in the paid labor force.

**Reverse Discrimination**

While researchers debated the merit of affirmative action, the general public—particularly Whites but also some affluent African Americans and Hispanics—questioned the wisdom of the program. Particularly strident were the charges of reverse discrimination: that government actions cause better-qualified White men to be bypassed in favor of women and minority men. *Reverse discrimination* is an emotional term because it conjures up the notion that somehow women and minorities will subject White men in the United States to the same treatment received by minorities during the last three centuries. Increasingly, critics of affirmative action call for color-blind policies, which would end affirmative action and, they argue, allow all people to be judged fairly. Of major significance, often overlooked in public debates, is that a color-blind policy implies a very limited role for the state in addressing social inequality between racial and ethnic groups (Kahng 1978; Skrentny 1996; Winant 1994).

Is it possible to have color-blind policies in the United States as we move into the twenty-first century? Supporters of affirmative action contend that as long as businesses rely on informal social networks, personal recommendations, and family ties, White men will have a distinct advantage built on generations of being in positions of power. Furthermore, an end to affirmative action should also mean an end to the many programs that give advantages to certain businesses, homeowners, veterans, farmers, and others. Most of these preference-holders are White (Kilson 1995; Mack 1996).

Consequently, by the 1990s, affirmative action had emerged as an increasingly important issue in state and national political campaigns. Generally, discussion focused on the use of quotas in hiring practices. Supporters of affirmative action argue that hiring goals establish “floors” for minority inclusion but do not exclude truly qualified candidates from any group. Opponents insist that these “targets” are, in fact, quotas that lead to reverse discrimination.

The state of California, in particular, was a battleground for this controversial issue. The California Civil Rights Initiative was placed on the ballot in 1996 as a referendum to amend the state constitution and prohibit any programs that give preference to women and minorities for college admission, employment, promotion, or government contracts. Overall, 54 percent of the voters backed the state proposition, with 61 percent of men in favor compared with only 48 percent of women. Whites, who represented 74 percent of the voters, voted in favor of the measure overwhelmingly, with 63 percent backing Proposition 209. This compares with 26 percent of African Americans, 24 percent of Hispanics, and 39 percent of Asian Americans favoring the end of affirmative action in state-operated institutions. Obviously, the voters—Whites and men—who perceived themselves as least likely to benefit from affirmative action overwhelmingly favored Proposition 209.
Legal challenges continue concerning Proposition 209, which is being implemented unevenly throughout the state. Much of the attention has focused on the impact that reducing racial preference programs will have in law and medical schools, where competition for admission is very high. The courts have upheld the measures, and in 1998 voters in Washington state passed a similar anti-affirmative action measure (Dolan 2000).

The Glass Ceiling

We have been talking primarily about racial and ethnic groups as if they have uniformly failed to keep pace with Whites. Although that is accurate, there are tens of thousands of people of color who have matched and even exceeded Whites in terms of income. For example, in 2000 more than 815,000 Black households and more than 556,000 Hispanic households earned more than $100,000. What can we say about affluent members of subordinate groups in the United States? (Bureau of the Census 2001e).

Prejudice does not necessarily end with wealth. Black newspaper columnist De Wayne Wickham (1998) wrote of the subtle racism he had experienced. He heard a White clerk in a supermarket ask a White customer whether she knew the price of an item the computer would not scan; when the problem occurred while the clerk was ringing up Wickham's groceries, she called for a price check. Affluent subordinate-group members routinely report being blocked as they move toward the first-class section aboard airplanes or seek service in upscale stores. Another journalist, Ellis Cose
(1993), has called these insults the soul-destroying slights to affluent minorities that lead to the "rage of a privileged class."

Discrimination persists for even the educated and qualified from the best family backgrounds. As subordinate-group members are able to compete successfully, they sometimes encounter attitudinal or organizational bias that prevents them from reaching their full potential. They have confronted what has come to be called the glass ceiling. This refers to the barrier that blocks the promotion of a qualified worker because of gender or minority membership (Figure 3.3 on p. 95). Often people entering nontraditional areas of employment become marginalized and made to feel uncomfortable, much like the situation of immigrants who feel a part of two cultures, as we discussed in Chapter 1.

The reasons for glass ceilings are as many as the occurrences. It may be that one Black or one woman vice-president is regarded as enough, so the second potential candidate faces a block to movement up through management. Decision makers may be concerned that their clientele will not trust them if they have too many people of color or may worry that a talented woman could become overwhelmed with her duties as a mother and wife and thus perform poorly in the workplace.

Concern about women and minorities climbing a broken ladder led to the formation in 1991 of the Glass Ceiling Commission, with the U.S. Secretary of Labor chairing the twenty-one-member group. Initially, it regarded some of the glass ceiling barriers as

- Lack of management commitment to establishing systems, policies, and practices for achieving workplace diversity and upward mobility
- Pay inequities for work of equal or comparable value
- Sex-, race-, and ethnicity-based stereotyping and harassment
- Unfair recruitment practices
- Lack of family-friendly workplace policies
- "Parent-track" policies that discourage parental leave policies
- Limited opportunities for advancement to decision-making positions

All this contributes to women not moving into the ultimate decision-making positions in the nation's corporate giants.

The commission report documented that the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions results in large part from the presence of glass ceilings. As the commission noted, 97 percent of the senior managers of Fortune 1000 industrial and Fortune 500 service companies are White, and about 96 percent are men. A follow-up study in 2001 found some change among women's representation. Although only 2 percent of Fortune 1000 board seats were held by women of color, another 16 percent were held by White women. This still leaves 82 percent of the board members men. Yet another study looking at Hispanic representation found that Latinos constitute less than 2 percent of board representation in Fortune 1000 companies. In 2002, Fortune showcased the 50 "best companies for minorities." Even in these large firms, 82 percent of the Board of Directors were White and 13 percent of the top 50 paid in each firm were White. (Catalyst 2001a; Department of Labor 1993, 1995; Hickman 2002; Riley 2000).

Glass ceilings are not the only barrier. There are also glass walls. Catalyst, a nonprofit research organization, conducted interviews in 1992 and again in 2001 with senior and middle managers from larger corporations. The study found that even before glass ceilings are encountered, women and racial and ethnic minorities face glass walls that keep them from moving laterally. Specifically, the study found that women tend to be placed in staff or support positions in areas such as public relations and human resources and are often directed away from jobs in core areas such as marketing, production, and sales. Women are assigned to, and therefore trapped in, jobs that reflect their stereotypical helping nature and encounter glass walls that cut off access to jobs that might lead to broader experience and advancement (Catalyst 2001b; Lopez 1992).
Residential Segregation

Richard T. Schaefer

Typically in the United States, as noted, White children attend predominantly White schools, Black children attend predominantly Black schools, and Hispanic children attend predominantly Hispanic schools. This school segregation is not only the result of the failure to accept busing but also the effect of residential segregation. In their studies on segregation, Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1993:8) concluded that racial separation “continues to exist because white America has not had the political will or desire to dismantle it.” In Chapter 1, we noted the persuasiveness of residential segregation as reflected in Census 2000 (refer back to Figure 1.5). This racial isolation in neighborhoods has not improved since the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s.

What factors create residential segregation in the United States? Among the primary factors are the following:

- Because of private prejudice and discrimination, people refuse to sell or rent to people of the “wrong” race, ethnicity, or religion.
- The prejudicial policies of real estate companies steer people to the “correct” neighborhoods.
- Government policies enforce antibias legislation ineffectively.
- Public housing policies today, as well as past construction patterns, reinforce housing for the poor in inner-city neighborhoods.
- Policies of banks and other lenders create barriers based on race to financing home purchasing.

This last issue of racial-basis financing deserves further explanation. In the 1990s, new attention was given to the persistence of redlining, the practice of discrimination against people trying to buy homes in minority and racially changing neighborhoods. As we noticed in our “Research Focus” in Chapter 3, this practice persists in the United States in a more subtle fashion.

It is important to recall the implications of this discrimination in home financing for the African American community. Earlier in the chapter, we noted the great disparity between Black and White family wealth and the implications this had for both the present and future generations. The key factor in this inequality was the failure of African Americans to accumulate wealth through home buying. Now we see that discrimination plays a documented role in this barrier to what is possible; in 2001, 48 percent of Blacks were homeowners, compared with 74 percent of Whites (Department of Commerce 2002).

Although the African American concentration in the central cities has increased, a small but growing number of Blacks have moved into suburban areas. By 2000, 35 percent of the nation’s metropolitan African Americans lived in suburban areas. Yet the most significant growth in the percentage of suburban African Americans has come from movement into suburbs that are predominantly Black or are adjacent to predominantly Black areas. In many instances, therefore, it represents further ghettoization and spillover from city slums. It is not necessarily a signal of two cars and a backyard pool. In many instances, the suburbs with large Black populations are iso-
lated from surrounding White communities and have less satisfactory housing and municipal services but, ironically, pay higher taxes (Bureau of the Census 2001b:Table 21).

A dual housing market is part of today's reality, although attacks continue against the remaining legal barriers to fair housing. In theory, zoning laws are enacted to ensure that specific standards of housing construction will be satisfied. These regulations can also separate industrial and commercial enterprises from residential areas. However, some zoning laws in suburbs have seemed to curb the development of low- and moderate-income housing that would attract African Americans who want to move out of the central cities.

For years, the construction of low-income public housing in the ghetto has furthered racial segregation. The courts have not ruled consistently in this matter in recent years so, as with affirmative action and busing, public officials lack clear guidance. In the suburban Chicago community of Arlington Heights, the courts decided in 1977 that a community could refuse to rezone to allow low-income housing, a policy that effectively kept out African Americans. In 1988, however, the courts fined Yonkers, a city adjoining New York City, for failing to build public housing for low- and middle-income households in a way that would foster integration.

Even if court decisions continue to dismantle exclusionary housing practices, the rapid growth of integrated neighborhoods is unlikely. In the future, African American housing probably will continue to improve, remain primarily in all-Black neighborhoods, and remain inferior in quality to White housing. This gap is greater than can be explained by differences in social class.
The Consequences of Subordinate-Group Status

Richard T. Schaefer

There are several consequences for a group of subordinate status. These differ in their degree of harshness, ranging from physical annihilation to absorption into the dominant group. In this section, we will examine six consequences of subordinate-group status: extermination, expulsion, secession, segregation, fusion, and assimilation. Figure 1.4 (on p. 22) illustrates how these consequences can be defined.

EXTERMINATION

The most extreme way of dealing with a subordinate group is to eliminate it. One historical example is the British destruction of the people of Tasmania, an island off the coast of Australia. There were 5,000 Tasmanians in 1800, but because they were attacked by settlers and forced to live on less habitable islands, the last full-blooded Tasmanian died in 1876. A human group had become extinct, totally eliminated.

Today the term genocide is used to describe the deliberate, systematic killing of an entire people or nation. This term is often used in reference to the Holocaust, Nazi Germany's extermination of 12 million European Jews and other ethnic minorities during World War II. The term ethnic cleansing was introduced into the world's vocabulary as ethnic Serbs instituted a policy intended to "cleanse"—eliminate—

![Intergroup Relations Continuum](image)

FIGURE 1.4 Intergroup Relations Continuum

The social consequences of being in a subordinate group can be viewed along a continuum ranging from extermination to forms of mutual acceptance such as pluralism.

Muslims from parts of Bosnia. More recently, a genocidal war between the Hutu and Tutsi people in Rwanda left 300,000 school-age children orphaned.

However, genocide also appropriately describes White policies toward Native Americans in the nineteenth century. In 1800, the American Indian population in the United States was about 600,000; by 1850 it had been reduced to 250,000 through warfare with the U.S. Army, disease, and forced relocation to inhospitable environments.
EXPULSION

Dominant groups may choose to force a specific subordinate group to leave certain areas or even vacate a country. Expulsion therefore is another extreme consequence of minority-group status. European colonial powers in North America and eventually the U.S. government itself drove almost all Native Americans out of their tribal lands into unfamiliar territory.

More recently, Vietnam in 1979 expelled nearly 1 million ethnic Chinese from the country, partly as a result of centuries of hostility between the two Asian neighbors. These "boat people" were abruptly eliminated as a minority within Vietnamese society. This expulsion meant that they were uprooted and became a new minority group in many nations, including Australia, France, the United States, and Canada. Thus expulsion may remove a minority group from one society; however, the expelled people merely go to another nation, where they are again a minority group.

SECESSION

A group ceases to be a subordinate group when it secedes to form a new nation or moves to an already established nation, where it becomes dominant. After Great Britain withdrew from Palestine, Jewish people achieved a dominant position in 1948, attracting Jews from throughout the world to the new state of Israel. In a similar fashion, Pakistan was created in 1947 when India was partitioned. The predominantly Muslim areas in the north became Pakistan, making India predominantly Hindu. Throughout this century, minorities have repudiated dominant customs. In this spirit, the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Armenian peoples, not content to be merely tolerated by the majority, all seceded to form independent states after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1999, ethnic Albanians fought bitterly for their cultural and political recognition in the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia.

Some African Americans have called for secession. Suggestions dating back to the early 1700s supported the return of Blacks to Africa as a solution to racial problems. The settlement target of the American Colonization Society was Liberia, but proposals were also advanced to establish settlements in other areas. Territorial separatism and the emigrationist ideology were recurrent and interrelated themes among African Americans from the late nineteenth century well into the 1980s. The Black Muslims, or Nation of Islam, once expressed the desire for complete separation in their own state or territory within the present borders of the United States. Although a secession of Blacks from the United States has not taken place, it has been proposed.

SEGREGATION

Segregation is the physical separation of two groups in residence, workplace, and social functions. Generally, the dominant group imposes segregation on a subordinate group. Segregation is rarely complete, however; intergroup contact inevitably occurs even in the most segregated societies.

Sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1998) wrote American Apartheid, which described segregation in U.S. cities based on 1990 data. The title of their book was meant to indicate that neighborhoods in the United States resembled the segregation of the rigid government-imposed racial segregation that prevailed for so long in the Republic of South Africa.

Analyzing the Census 2000 results shows little change despite growing racial and ethnic diversity in the nation. Sociologists measure racial segregation using a segregation index or index of dissimilarity. The index ranges from 0 to 100, giving the percentage of a group that would have to move to achieve even residential patterns. For example, Atlanta has an index of 65.6 for Black–White segregation, which means that about 66 percent of either Blacks or Whites would have to move so that each small
neighborhood (or census tract) would have the same racial balance as the metropolitan area as a whole. In Figure 1.5, we give the index values for the most and least segregated metropolitan areas among the 50 largest in the nation with respect to the Black–White racial divide.

Overall, the least segregated metropolitan areas tend to be those with smallest African American populations. For Latinos, the separation patterns are similar, with the highest patterns of isolation occurring in the cities with the larger number of Hispanics (Figure 1.6). There has been little change in overall levels of racial and ethnic segregation from 1990 to 2000. Similarly, Asian–White segregation remains high and showed little change during the 1990s (Lewis Mumford Center 2001).

This focus on metropolitan areas should not cause us to ignore the continuing legally sanctioned segregation of Native Americans on reservations. Although the majority of our nation’s first inhabitants live outside these tribal areas, the reservations play a prominent role in the identity of Native Americans. Although it is easier to maintain tribal identity on the reservation, economic and educational opportunities are more limited in these areas segregated from the rest of society.

Residential segregation patterns are not unique to the United States. In Germany today, they speak of "Ghettoisierung" (or "ghettoization") as concentrations of Turkish immigrants are emerging. Social scientists in Sweden have used the segregation index to document the isolation of Greek, Chilean, and Turkish immigrants from the rest of the population. Segregation is present in almost all multicultural societies.

FUSION

Fusion occurs when a minority and a majority group combine to form a new group. This combining can be expressed as $A + B + C \rightarrow D$ where $A$, $B$, and $C$ represent the groups present in a society, and $D$ signifies the result, a cultural–racial group unlike any of the initial groups. Theoretically, fusion does not entail intermarriage, but it is very similar to amalgamation, or the process by which a dominant group and a subordinate group combine through intermarriage into a new people. In everyday speech, the words fusion and amalgamation are rarely used, but the concept is expressed in the notion of a human melting pot, in which diverse racial or ethnic groups form a new creation, a new cultural entity (Newman 1973).
The analogy of the cauldron, the "melting pot," was first used to describe the United States by the French observer Crévecoeur in 1782. The phrase dates back to the Middle Ages, when alchemists attempted to change less valuable metals into gold and silver. Similarly, the idea of the human melting pot implied that the new group would represent only the best qualities and attributes of the different cultures contributing to it. The belief in the United States as a melting pot became widespread in the early twentieth century. This belief suggested that the United States had an almost divine mission to destroy artificial divisions and create a single kind of human. However, the dominant group had indicated its unwillingness to welcome such groups as Native Americans, Blacks, Hispanics, Jews, Asians, and Irish Roman Catholics into the melting pot. It is a mistake to think of the United States as an ethnic mixing bowl. Although there are superficial signs of fusion, as in a cuisine that includes sauerkraut and spaghetti, but most contributions of subordinate groups are ignored (Gleason 1980).

Marriage patterns indicate the resistance to fusion. People are unwilling, in varying degrees, to marry out of their own ethnic, religious, and racial groups. Surveys show that 20 to 50 percent of various White ethnic groups report single ancestry. When White ethnics do cross boundaries, they tend to marry within their religion and social class. For example, Italians are more likely to marry Irish, who are also Catholic, than they are to marry Protestant Swedes.

There is only modest evidence of a fusion of races in the United States. Racial intermarriage has been increasing, and the number of interracial couples immigrating to the United States has also grown. In 1980, there were 167,000 Black-White couples, but by 2000 there were 363,000. Taken together, interracial couples still account for only 2 to 3 percent of all married couples. Among couples in which at least one member is Hispanic, marriages with a non-Hispanic partner account for about 1 out of 4 (Bureau of the Census 2001j:47).

ASSIMILATION

Assimilation is the process by which a subordinate individual or group takes on the characteristics of the dominant group and is eventually accepted as part of that group. Assimilation is a majority ideology in which $A + B + C \rightarrow A$. The majority ($A$) dominates in such a way that the minorities ($B$ and $C$) become indistinguishable from
the dominant group. Assimilation dictates conformity to the dominant group, regardless of how many racial, ethnic, or religious groups are involved (Bash 1979; Gordon 1964, 1996; Hirschman 1983; Newman 1973:59).

To be complete, assimilation must entail an active effort by the minority-group individual to shed all distinguishing actions and beliefs and the unqualified acceptance of that individual by the dominant society. In the United States, dominant White society encourages assimilation. The assimilation perspective tends to devalue alien culture and to treasure the dominant. For example, assimilation assumes that whatever is admirable among Blacks was adapted from Whites and that whatever is bad is inherently Black. The assimilation solution to Black-White conflict is the development of a consensus around White American values.

Assimilation is very difficult. The person must forsake his or her cultural tradition to become part of a different, often antagonistic culture. Members of the subordinate group who choose not to assimilate look on those who do as deserters.

Assimilation does not occur at the same pace for all groups or for all individuals in the same group. Assimilation tends to take longer under the following conditions:

- The differences between the minority and the majority are large.
- The majority is not receptive, or the minority retains its own culture.
- The minority group arrives in a short period of time.
- The minority-group residents are concentrated rather than dispersed.
- The arrival is recent, and the homeland is accessible.

Assimilation is not a smooth process (Warner and Srole 1945).

Assimilation is viewed by many as unfair or even dictatorial. However, members of the dominant group see it as reasonable that people shed their distinctive cultural traditions. In public discussions today, assimilation is the ideology of the dominant group in forcing people how to act. Consequently, the social institutions in the United States, such as the educational system, economy, government, religion, and medicine, all push toward assimilation, with occasional references to the pluralist approach.

THE PLURALIST PERSPECTIVE

Thus far we have concentrated on how subordinate groups cease to exist (removal) or take on the characteristics of the dominant group (assimilation). The alternative to these relationships between the majority and the minority is pluralism. Pluralism implies that various groups in a society have mutual respect for one another's culture, a respect that allows minorities to express their own culture without suffering prejudice or hostility. Whereas the assimilationist or integrationist seeks the elimination of ethnic boundaries, the pluralist believes in maintaining many of them.

There are limits to cultural freedom. A Romanian immigrant to the United States could not expect to avoid learning English and still move up the occupational ladder. To survive, a society must have a consensus among its members on basic ideals, values, and beliefs. Nevertheless, there is still plenty of room for variety. Earlier, fusion was described as $A + B + C \rightarrow D$ and assimilation as $A + B + C \rightarrow A$. Using this same scheme, we can think of pluralism as $A + B + C \rightarrow A + B + C$, where groups coexist in one society (Manning 1995; Newman 1973; Simpson 1995).

In the United States, cultural pluralism is more an ideal than a reality. Although there are vestiges of cultural pluralism—in the various ethnic neighborhoods in major cities, for instance—the rule has been for subordinate groups to assimilate. The cost of cultural integrity has been high. The various Native American tribes have succeeded to a large extent in maintaining their heritage, but the price has been bare subsistence on federal reservations.

In the United States, there is a reemergence of ethnic identification by groups that had previously expressed little interest in their heritage. Groups that make up the
dominant majority are also reasserting their ethnic heritage. Various nationality groups are rekindling interest in almost forgotten languages, customs, festivals, and traditions. In some instances, this expression of the past has taken the form of a protest against exclusion from the dominant society. For example, Chinese youths chastise their elders for forgetting the old ways and accepting White American influence and control.

The most visible controversy about pluralism is the debate surrounding bilingualism. Bilingualism is the use of two or more languages in places of work or education, with each language being treated as equally legitimate.

As of 2000, about one of every six people (17 percent) speak a native language other than English at home. In California, this proportion is more than 40 percent. Consequently, all segments of society are affected. The California state judicial system officially provides court interpreters in 100 different languages. In one robbery case, witnesses and victims called on interpreters in six languages: Spanish, Cambodian, Punjabi (India), Lebanese Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, and Tagalog (Philippines). Indeed, fifty different languages are spoken by at least 30,000 residents of this country (Weinstein and Liu 2000).

The passionate debate under way in the United States over bilingualism often acknowledges the large number of people who do not speak English at home. In education, bilingualism has seemed to be one way of helping millions of people who want to learn English to function more efficiently within the United States.

Bilingualism for almost two decades has been a political issue. A proposed Constitutional amendment has been introduced that designates English as the "official language of the nation." A major force behind the proposed amendment and other efforts to restrict bilingualism is "U.S. English," a nationwide organization that views the English language as the "social glue" that keeps the nation together. This organization supports assimilation. By contrast, Hispanic leaders see the U.S. English campaign as a veiled expression of racism.
Hate Crimes

Richard T. Schaefer

Although prejudice certainly is not new in the United States, it is receiving increased attention as it manifests itself in neighborhoods, at meetings, and on college campuses. The Hate Crime Statistics Act, which became law in 1990, directs the Department of Justice to gather data on hate or bias crimes. The government defines a hate crime as

_a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, ethnic/national origin group, or sexual-orientation group._ (Department of Justice 2001c:58)

This law created a national mandate to identify such crimes, whereas previously only twelve states had monitored hate crimes. In 1994, the act was amended to include disabilities, both physical and mental, as factors that could be considered a basis for hate crimes.

In 2001, law enforcement agencies released hate crime data submitted by police agencies covering 85 percent of the United States. Even though many, many hate crimes are not reported, a staggering number of offenses that come to law agencies' attention were motivated by hate. There were official reports of more than 7,800 hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents. As indicated in Figure 2.2, race was the apparent motivation for the bias in about 55 percent of the reports, and religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity accounted for 10 to 17 percent each. Vandalism and intimidation were the most common, but 31 percent of the incidents against people involved assault, rape, or murder (Department of Justice 2001a).

National legislation and publicity have made _hate crime_ a meaningful term, and we are beginning to recognize the victimization associated with such incidents. There is a proposal that would make a violent crime into a federal crime if it were motivated by racial or religious bias. Although passage is uncertain, the serious consideration of the proposal indicates a willingness to consider a major expansion of federal jurisdiction. Currently, federal law prohibits crimes motivated by race, color, religion, or national origin only if they involve violation of a federally guaranteed right, such as voting (Dickey 2000; Ferber et al 2000).

Most hate crimes are the result of people acting alone or with a few others, but there is a troubling pattern of organized hate groups that dates back more than 130 years in the United States to the founding of the Ku Klux Klan. As shown in Figure 2.3, some people organize into groups with the express purpose of showing their hatred toward other groups of people. Law enforcement agencies attempt to monitor such groups but are limited in their actions by constitutional freedoms of speech and assembly.

Victimized groups are not merely observing these events. Watchdog organizations play an important role in documenting bias-motivated violence; among such groups are the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
Established hate groups have even set up propaganda sites on the World Wide Web. This also creates opportunities for previously unknown haters and hate groups to promote themselves. However, hate crime legislation does not affect such outlets because of legal questions involving freedom of speech. An even more recent technique has been to use instant messaging software, which enables Internet users to create a private chat room with another individual. Enterprising bigots use directories to target their attacks through instant messaging, much as harassing telephone calls have been placed in the past (ADL 1996, 2001; Jenness 1995).

What causes people to dislike entire groups of other people? Is it possible to change attitudes? This chapter tries to answer these questions about prejudice. Chapter 3 focuses on discrimination.
Prejudice and Discrimination

Richard T. Schaefer

Prejudice and discrimination are related concepts but are not the same. Prejudice is a negative attitude toward an entire category of people. The two important components in this definition are attitude and entire category. Prejudice involves attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs, not actions. Prejudice often is expressed through the use of ethnophaulisms, or ethnic slurs, which include derisive nicknames such as honky, gook, or wetback. Ethnophaulisms also include speaking about or to members of a particular group in a condescending way ("José does well in school for a Mexican American") or referring to a middle-aged woman as "one of the girls."

A prejudiced belief leads to categorical rejection. Prejudice is not disliking someone you meet because you find his or her behavior objectionable. It is disliking an entire racial or ethnic group, even if you have had little or no contact with that group. A college student who requests a room change after three weeks of enduring his roommate's sleeping all day, playing loud music all night, and piling garbage on his desk is not prejudiced. However, he is displaying prejudice if he requests a change upon arriving at school and learning that his new roommate is of a different nationality.

Prejudice is a belief or attitude; discrimination is action. Discrimination involves behavior that excludes all members of a group from certain rights, opportunities, or privileges. Like prejudice, it must be categorical. If an employer refuses to hire as a typist an Italian American who is illiterate, it is not discrimination. If she refuses to hire any Italian Americans because she thinks they are incompetent and does not make the effort to see whether an applicant is qualified, it is discrimination.

Merton's Typology

Prejudice does not necessarily coincide with discriminatory behavior. In exploring the relationship between negative attitudes and negative behavior, sociologist Robert Merton (1949, 1976) identified four major categories (Figure 2.4). The label added to each of Merton's categories may more readily identify the type of person being described. These are

1. The unprejudiced nondiscriminator: all-weather liberal
2. The unprejudiced discriminator: reluctant liberal
3. The prejudiced nondiscriminator: timid bigot
4. The prejudiced discriminator: all-weather bigot

As the term is used in types 1 and 2, liberals are committed to equality among people. The all-weather liberal believes in equality and practices it. Merton was quick to observe that all-weather liberals may be far removed from any real competition with subordinate groups such as African Americans or women. Furthermore, such people may be content with their own behavior and may do little to change themselves. The reluctant liberal is not this committed to equality between groups. Social pressure may cause such a person to discriminate. Fear of losing employees may lead a man-
ager to avoid promoting women to supervisory capacities. Equal-opportunity legislation may be the best way to influence the reluctant liberals.

Types 3 and 4 do not believe in equal treatment for racial and ethnic groups, but they vary in their willingness to act. The timid bigot, type 3, will not discriminate if discrimination costs money or reduces profits or if he or she is pressured not to by peers or the government. The all-weather bigot unhesitatingly acts on the prejudiced beliefs he or she holds.

![Diagram of prejudiced and prejudiced individuals](image)

**FIGURE 2.4 Prejudice and Discrimination**

As sociologist Robert Merton’s formulation shows, prejudice and discrimination are related to each other but are not the same.

**LAPIERE’S STUDY**

Merton’s typology points out that attitudes should not be confused with behavior. People do not always act as they believe. More than half a century ago, Richard LaPiere (1934, 1969) exposed the relationship between racial attitudes and social conduct. From 1930 to 1932 LaPiere traveled throughout the United States with a Chinese couple. Despite an alleged climate of intolerance of Asians, LaPiere observed that the couple was treated courteously at hotels, motels, and restaurants. He was puzzled by the good reception they received; all the conventional attitude surveys showed extreme prejudice by Whites toward the Chinese.

Was it possible that LaPiere had been fortunate during his travels and consistently stopped at places operated by the tolerant members of the dominant group? To test
this possibility, he sent questionnaires asking the very establishments at which they had been served whether the owner would "accept members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment." More than 90 percent responded "no," even though LaPiere's Chinese couple had been treated politely at all the establishments. How can this inconsistency be explained? People who returned questionnaires reflecting prejudice were unwilling to act based on those asserted beliefs; they were timid bigots.

The LaPiere study is not without flaws. First, he had no way of knowing whether the respondent to the questionnaire was the same person who had served him and the Chinese couple. Second, he accompanied the couple, but the questionnaire suggested that the arrival would be unescorted (and, in the minds of some, uncontrolled) and perhaps would consist of many Chinese people. Third, personnel may have changed between the time of the visit and the mailing of the questionnaire (Deutscher et al. 1999).

The LaPiere technique has been replicated with similar results. This technique raises the question of whether attitudes are important if they are not completely reflected in behavior. But if attitudes are not important in small matters, they are important in other ways: lawmakers legislate and courts may reach decisions based on what the public thinks.

This is not just a hypothetical possibility. Legislators in the United States often are persuaded to vote in a certain way by what they perceive as changed attitudes toward immigration, affirmative action, abortion, and prayer in public schools. Sociologists have enumerated some of prejudice's functions. For the majority group, it serves to maintain privileged occupations and more power for its members.

The following sections examine the theories of why prejudice exists and discuss the content and extent of prejudice today.
Theories of Prejudice

Richard T. Schaefer

Prejudice is learned. Friends, relatives, newspapers, books, movies, television, and the Internet all teach it. Awareness begins at an early age that there are differences between people that society judges to be important. Several theories have been advanced to explain the rejection of certain groups in a society. We will examine four theoretical explanations. The first two (scapegoating and authoritarian personality) tend to be psychological, emphasizing why a particular person harbors ill feelings. The second two are more sociological (exploitation and normative), which view prejudice in the context of our interaction in larger society.

SCAPEGOATING THEORY

Scapegoating theory says that prejudiced people believe they are society’s victims. The term scapegoat comes from a biblical injunction telling the Hebrews to send a goat into the wilderness to symbolically carry away the people’s sins. Similarly, the theory of scapegoating suggests that, rather than accepting guilt for some failure, a person transfers the responsibility for failure to some vulnerable group. In the major tragic twentieth-century example, Adolf Hitler used the Jews as the scapegoat for all German social and economic ills in the 1930s. This premise led to the passage of laws restricting Jewish life in pre-World War II Germany and eventually escalated into the mass extermination of Europe’s Jews.

Today in the United States, immigrants, whether legal or illegal, often are blamed by “real Americans” for their failures to get jobs or secure desirable housing. The immigrant becomes the scapegoat for one’s own lack of skills, planning, or motivation. It is so much easier to blame someone else.

Like exploitation theory, scapegoating theory adds to our understanding of why prejudice exists but does not explain all its facets. For example, scapegoating theory offers little explanation of why a specific group is selected or why frustration is not taken out on the real culprit when possible. Also, both the exploitation and the scapegoating theories suggest that every person sharing the same general experiences in society would be equally prejudiced, but that is not the case. Prejudice varies between individuals who seem to benefit equally from the exploitation of a subordinate group or who have experienced equal frustration. In an effort to explain these personality differences, social scientists developed the concept of the authoritarian personality.

AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY THEORY

A number of social scientists do not see prejudice as an isolated trait that anyone can have. Several efforts have been made to detail the prejudiced personality, but the most comprehensive effort culminated in a volume titled The Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al. 1950). Using a variety of tests and relying on more than 2,000 respondents, ranging from middle-class Whites to inmates of San Quentin (California) State Prison, the authors claimed they had isolated the characteristics of the authoritarian personality.

In these authors’ view, the basic characteristics of the authoritarian personality are adherence to conventional values, uncritical acceptance of authority, and concern
with power and toughness. With obvious relevance to the development of intolerance, the authoritarian personality was also characterized by aggressiveness toward people who did not conform to conventional norms or obey authority. According to the researchers, this personality type developed from an early childhood of harsh discipline. A child with an authoritarian upbringing obeyed and then later treated others as he or she had been raised.

This study has been widely criticized, but the very existence of such wide criticism indicates the influence of the study. Critics have attacked the study's equation of authoritarianism with right-wing politics (although liberals can also be rigid); its failure to see that prejudice is more closely related to other individual traits, such as social class, than to authoritarianism as it was defined; and the research methods used. Graham Kinloch (1974), discussing personality research, added a fourth criticism: the authors concentrated on factors behind extreme racial prejudice rather than on more common expressions of hostility.

EXPLOITATION THEORY

Racial prejudice often is used to justify keeping a group in a subordinate position, such as a lower social class. Conflict theorists in particular stress the role of racial and ethnic hostility as a way for the dominant group to keep intact its position of status and power. Indeed, this approach maintains that even the less affluent White working class uses prejudice to minimize competition from upwardly mobile minorities.

This exploitation theory is clearly part of the Marxist tradition in sociological thought. Karl Marx emphasized exploitation of the lower class as an integral part of capitalism. Similarly, the exploitation or conflict approach explains how racism can stigmatize a group as inferior so that the exploitation of that group can be justified. As developed by Oliver Cox (1942), exploitation theory saw prejudice against Blacks as an extension of the inequality faced by the entire lower class.

The exploitation theory of prejudice is persuasive. Japanese Americans were the object of little prejudice until they began to enter occupations that brought them into competition with Whites. The movement to keep Chinese out of the country became strongest during the late nineteenth century, when Chinese immigrants and Whites fought over dwindling numbers of jobs. Both the enslavement of African Americans and the removal westward of Native Americans were to a significant degree economically motivated.

Although many cases support the exploitation theory, it is too limited to explain prejudice in all its forms. First, not all minority groups are exploited economically to the same extent. Second, many groups that have been the victims of prejudice have not been persecuted for economic reasons, such as the Quakers or gays and lesbians. Nevertheless, as Gordon Allport (1979) concludes, the exploitation theory correctly points a finger at one of the factors in prejudice, that is, the rationalized self-interest of the privileged.

NORMATIVE APPROACH

Although personality factors are important contributors to prejudice, normative or situational factors must also be given serious consideration. The normative approach takes the view that prejudice is influenced by societal norms and situations that encourage or discourage the tolerance of minorities.

Analysis reveals how societal influences shape a climate for tolerance or intolerance. Societies develop social norms that dictate not only what foods are desirable (or forbidden) but also what racial and ethnic groups are to be favored (or despised). Social forces operate in a society to encourage or discourage tolerance. The force may be widespread, such as the pressure on White Southerners to oppose racial equality while there was slavery or segregation. The influence of social norms may be limited.
### TABLE 2.1
Theories of Prejudice

There is no one explanation of why prejudice exists, but several approaches taken together offer insight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Proponent</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scapegoating</td>
<td>Bruno Bettelheim</td>
<td>People blame others for their own failures.</td>
<td>An unsuccessful applicant assumes that a minority member or a woman got “his” job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morris Janowitz</td>
<td></td>
<td>The rigid personality type dislikes people who are different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Adorno and associates</td>
<td>Childrearing leads one to develop intolerance as an adult.</td>
<td>A minority member is hired at a lower wage level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>Oliver C. Cox</td>
<td>People use others unfairly for economic advantage.</td>
<td>A minority member is hired at a lower wage level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marxist theory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Thomas Pettigrew</td>
<td>Peer and social influences encourage tolerance or intolerance.</td>
<td>A person from an intolerant household is more likely to be openly prejudiced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

as when one man finds himself becoming more sexist as he competes with three women for a position in a prestigious law firm.

We should not view the four approaches to prejudice summarized in Table 2.1 as mutually exclusive. Social circumstances provide cues for a person’s attitudes; personality determines the extent to which people follow social cues and the likelihood that they will encourage others to do the same. Societal norms may promote or deter tolerance; personality traits suggest the degree to which a person will conform to norms of intolerance. To understand prejudice, we need to use all four approaches together.
Gender Roles

Richard T. Schaefer

A college man, done with afternoon classes, heads off to get a pedicure and while the nail polish is drying sits on a nearby park bench finishing some needlepoint he started. Meanwhile, a college woman walks through the park chewing tobacco and spitting along the path. What is wrong with this picture? We are witnessing the open violation of how men and women are expected to act. So unlikely are these episodes that I have taken them from sociology teachers who specifically ask their students to go out, violate gender expectations, and record how they feel and how people react to their behavior (Nielsen et al. 2000:287).

Gender roles are society’s expectations of the proper behavior, attitudes, and activities of males and females. “Toughness” has traditionally been seen in the United States as masculine, desirable only in men, whereas “tenderness” has been viewed as feminine. A society may require that one sex or the other take the primary responsibility for the socialization of the children, economic support of the family, or religious leadership.

Without question, socialization has a powerful impact on the development of females and males in the United States. Indeed, the gender roles first encountered in early childhood often are a factor in defining a child’s popularity. Sociologists Patricia Adler and her colleagues (1992, 1998) observed elementary school children and found that boys typically achieved high status on the basis of their athletic ability, “coolness,” toughness, social skills, and success in relationships with girls. By contrast, girls gained popularity based on their parents’ economic background and their own physical appearance, social skills, and academic success.

It may be obvious that males and females are conditioned to assume certain roles, but the origin of gender roles as we know them is less clear. Many studies have been done on laboratory animals, such as injecting monkeys and rats with male and female hormones. Primates in their natural surroundings have been closely observed for the presence and nature of gender roles. Animal studies do not point to instinctual gender differences similar to what humans are familiar with as masculinity and femininity. Historically, women’s work came to be defined as a consequence of the birth process. Men, free of child-care responsibilities, generally became the hunters and foragers for food. Even though women must bear children, men could have cared for the young. Exactly why women were assigned that role in societies is not known.

Women’s role varies across different cultures. Furthermore, we know that acceptable behavior for men and women changes over time in a society. For example, the men in the royal courts of Europe in the late 1700s fulfilled present-day stereotypes of feminine appearance in their display of ornamental dress and personal vanity rather than resembling the men of a century later, although they still engaged in duels and other forms of aggression. The social roles of the sexes have no constants in time or space (Doyle and Paludi 1998).
Sociological Perspectives

Sociologist Estelle Disch (1997) points out that gender differences are maintained in our culture through the systematic socialization of babies and infants, children, adolescents, and adults. Even though different subcultures and even different families vary in child rearing, we teach our children to be boys and girls, even though men and women are more alike than they are different. But she noted that gender socialization is not something that stops with youth. “From the time we are born until we die, gender socialization is a constant part of our lives” (p. 74). Gender training persists, and the larger institutional structures reinforce it.

We are bombarded with expectations for behavior as men and women from many sources simultaneously. Many individual women hold positions involving high levels of responsibility and competence but may not be accorded the same respect as men. Similarly, individual men find the time to get involved with their children’s lives only to meet with disbelief and occasional surprise from health care and educational systems accustomed to dealing only with mothers. Even when individuals are motivated to stretch the social boundaries of gender, social structure and institutions often impede them. Gender differentiation in our culture is embedded in social institutions: the family, of course, but also education, religion, politics, the economy, medicine, and the mass media.

Through this lifelong socialization, people are labeled by virtue of their sex. Certain activities and behaviors are associated with men and others with women. Besides the labeling perspective, we can also use functionalist and conflict perspectives to grasp more firmly how gender roles develop.

Functionalists maintain that sex differentiation has contributed to overall social stability. Sociologists Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales (1955) argued that, to function most efficiently, the family needs adults who will specialize in particular roles. They believed that the arrangement of gender roles with which they were familiar had arisen because marital partners needed a division of labor.

The functionalist view is initially persuasive in explaining the way in which women and men are typically brought up in U.S. society. However, it would lead us to expect even girls and women with no interest in children to still become babysitters and mothers. Similarly, males with a caring feeling for children may be “programmed” into careers in the business world. Clearly, such a differentiation between the sexes can have harmful consequences for the person who does not fit into specific roles while depriving society of the optimal use of many talented people who are confined by sexual labeling. Consequently, the conflict perspective is increasingly convincing in its analysis of the development of gender roles.

Conflict theorists do not deny the presence of a differentiation by sex. In fact, they contend that the relationship between females and males has been one of unequal power, with men being dominant over women. Men may have become powerful in preindustrial times because their size, physical strength, and freedom from childbearing duties allowed them to dominate women physically. In contemporary societies, such considerations are not as important, yet cultural beliefs about the sexes are now long-established.

Both functionalists and conflict theorists acknowledge that it is not possible to change gender roles drastically without dramatic revisions in a culture’s social structure. Functionalists see potential social disorder, or at least unknown social consequences, if all aspects of traditional sex differentiation are disturbed. Yet for conflict theorists, no social structure is ultimately desirable if it has to be maintained through the oppression of its citizens.
Dreaming of Homes on the Reservation

Helen Rumbelow

CHINLE, Ariz.—This is bedtime on the Navajo reservation.

As rain hammered on the metal roof of their trailer, Shaunda Mae Tsosie, 23, sang her young sisters a Navajo lullaby. She shared a mattress squashed on the floor of their tiny bedroom with one of them; the other occupied a twin bed crammed into a corner. In the other bedroom, one brother lay awake as his two younger brothers put away homework and hailed bedding onto the floor.

Eventually, after the whispering and squabbles and sound of barking dogs quieted, their parents dragged a mattress from the corridor and settled down to sleep in the kitchen.

Susie Tsosie worries that her younger children need more room for schoolwork, and that Shaunda could use a place for her hobby of weaving traditional rugs, which helped her win her crown as Miss Navajo Nation. “And the table only seats two or three; we have to eat in shifts,” Tsosie said. “My dream is to have a larger home, so that we can all have Thanksgiving here.”

But for her—and most Native Americans—it is as if this vision of homeownership has become tangled in the feathered dream-catcher above her head. Two thousand miles away, a debate in Washington will play a large part in whether her children have a better chance.

The debate is, in part, something of a historical reckoning. When Indians agreed to relocate to reservations in the 19th century, one of the conditions was that the U.S. government provide them shelter. For most of the 20th century, government guidelines determined how and where most housing on Indian reservations was built. By most measures on the 2000 Census, America’s 2.5 million American Indians had the worst housing of any ethnic group. Those living on reservations were generally living in the poorest homes.

One in 6 reservation homes is crowded, three times the national average. One in 10 homes lacks plumbing, 35 times the norm. One home in 5 has no telephone.

In an effort to renovate a system that both sides agreed wasn’t working, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act was enacted six years ago, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development began handing over responsibility for housing to the tribes in the form of block grants. That law, the Indians feel, is the first to honor the government-to-government treaties they signed in the 1800s.

But now a new dispute has broken out, over money.

The National American Indian Housing Council in Washington, which represents the housing needs of all 562 federally recognized American Indian tribes, says the positive effects of the housing act are just beginning to show—but Congress has frozen funding for the past two years and looks likely to do so again in the next budget, for 2004.

The tribes are receiving about $640 million a year, said Kristy McCarthy, executive director of NAHIC, but they need $1.1 billion to start building homes for 200,000 families in crowded conditions. “On the reservations, people are growing up in situations not changed greatly in 100 years... The situation is just deplorable,” McCarthy said.

But Michael Liu, assistant secretary in the Office of Public and Indian Housing at HUD, said the tribes were not spending the money they were getting.

Of the $2.4 billion given to tribes through the housing act from 1998 to 2001, they have spent just more than half, leaving $1 billion in the bank, Liu said. He believes some tribes may have been overwhelmed by the shift to managing big budgets and building contracts.

“This may not be indicative of any fault,” Liu said. “It does take some time to develop the capacity to spend a significant amount of money. It’s new for tribes, it’s new for HUD.”

McCarthy, however, said most tribes had either spent their HUD money, or had long-term projects underway for which the money has been earmarked. “I’m very confused. HUD is saying the money has not been spent; everything I’ve seen shows this has not been true,” she said.

On the Navajo reservation, Annie Yazzi said that those in Washington would not argue so much over money if they could see her home.

Duct Tape and Soot

A few miles past the Burger King and Taco Bell in Window Rock, Ariz., the capital of the Navajo Nation, lies the land that Yazzi inherited. It’s a patch of red earth where, in accordance with Navajo tradition, she buried the umbilical cords of her six children—making it their land, too.

But her children have moved to Albuquerque because housing on the reservation is too poor, and her grandchildren get scared when they come to stay overnight.
Yazzi and her husband, Leo, who is disabled with diabetes, built their three-bedroom house themselves. In some places, it is held together with duct tape.

They don’t like having to go to the outhouse. With no running water, Yazzi must carry in a bucket from a tap a few hundred yards away to do the washing up. Every two days, the couple drive 25 miles to Gallup to take a shower at a friendly Big 8 motel.

All winter, they wear at least two sets of everything because the only heat comes from a wood stove in the front room. The walls are so sooty from the stove that the grandchildren play tick-tack-toe on it with their fingers. Wind whistles through a large hole in the wall where they tried to rig up electricity. The house smells of rotted wood and is beginning to lurch to one side when it rains.

“I want a house that I can take pride in, that I won’t be embarrassed for my children to see,” said Yazzi, 59.

This scene is repeated across the reservation, where a third of the 50,000 homes lack electricity and more than half lack running water. A survey by the tribe in 1999 concluded that 20,000 families lived in substandard housing. Casino-rich tribes on the East and West Coasts have received a lot of publicity, but the Navajo—like more than 90 percent of Indian tribes—have no casino.

The new housing act “represents a very significant change,” said David Listokin, a professor at the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University and author of a two-year study on housing in Indian country for the Fannie Mae Foundation, to be published next year.

“Before that, tribes had to keep on going to HUD as supplicants with their hands out, which went against the principle of Indian nations as sovereign people,” he said. “But the money is still only a fraction of the need. Everyone complains that they are not getting enough money, but Indian housing is where U.S. housing was in the 1940s.”

Even though the Tsozis have 11 jobs most of their lives, they, like the Tsosies—whose trailer was donated by their church—can’t just go out and buy a home for their land. The Navajo reservation, the largest of all reservations, is bigger than West Virginia, but only a handful of mortgages have been lent there.

This is because reservation land is held in trust by the federal government, which until recently made it impossible to use as equity in a mortgage—or equity in starting a business, the most common source of funding for small business start-ups. Only in recent years have lenders, with assistance from new government programs, found ways to make mortgages available.

Federal aid also did not work for Yazzi, because HUD allotted little money for infrastructure such as roads and water pipes, forcing tribes to build houses in groups. Yazzi, like most Navajos, did not want to leave her land for a subdivision.

The person who broke this deadlock is Chester Carl, executive director of the Navajo Housing Authority, former chairman of NAIIHC and a standard bearer of the new approach.

Huts to Houses

Carl proudly shows visitors around Church Rock, a community on the cusp of the future. On one side of the road are 40 dilapidated, barracks-style units that were built in the 1940s to house Navajos making ammunition during World War II—and are still used as housing.

On the other side of the road are 69 brand-new houses built with part of the $88 million the Navajo Housing Authority receives annually under the new act. One by one, the families in the wooden huts are being relocated into the new homes, but even as one family vacates a hut, another moves into it, Carl said.

The modern three-bedroom houses are modeled on the typical suburban home, a long way from the cheap rowhouses preferred by HUD, Carl said.

Further up the hill are scattered the Navajo’s first government-funded homes, built on an individual family’s land instead of in a subdivision. This is possible because the tribe can use the money as they see fit, such as infrastructure to remote homes.

“We didn’t consult HUD on anything about their design,” Carl said with pride. “Even some people on my staff have said these houses look too nice to be on the reservation.”

This is not just about feeling house-proud, said Carl, but about building the foundation of an Indian recovery. Not only will the new homes give children more room and rest for schoolwork and encourage young people to stay on the land, he said, but they will form the down payment for a new wave of Indian entrepreneurs.

He vigorously denied Lui’s accusations that the new money is not being claimed. He said that construction can be slow on the reservation, where his organization spends 30 to 40 cents of every dollar for a new house on infrastructure, such as roads and water pipes.

“You have to look at this in the context of U.S. history: First they tried to wipe us out, then to relocate us, and the latest move is self-determination. I’m worried that the next thing they will say is, ‘We gave you the money but you didn’t meet the need,’ when the problem is the money isn’t enough,” Carl said.

Peter Peterman, 46, a jewelry designer, and his wife are still settling into their new home in Church Rock, which overlooks the huts where they used to live. They are looking forward to winter, he said, because they won’t have to worry about the cold anymore.

“We were the first to move across in June, and hundreds of people came just to see,” Peterman said. “People would come at all hours of the day, even from Shiprock, just to see what the new houses were like.

“At the beginning, we felt like we were staying in a hotel, it was so nice,” Peterman said. “It was like the homes we’d seen on television, that we thought were a fantasy.”
FORT YATES, N.D. In writing the obituary of the Great Plains, social historians have looked out at the abandoned ranches, collapsed homesteads and dying towns huddled against the wind in a sea of grass and seen an epic failure.

And the numbers do tell a compelling story. More than 60 percent of the counties in the Great Plains lost population in the last 10 years. An area equal to the size of the original Louisiana Purchase, nearly 900,000 square miles, now has so few people that it meets the 19th-century Census Bureau definition of frontier, with six people or fewer per square mile. And a large swath of land has slipped even further, to a category the government once defined as vacant.

But something else is under way from the Badlands of the Dakotas to the tallgrass fields of Oklahoma: a restoration of lost landscape and forgotten people, suggesting that European agricultural settlement of big parts of the prairie may have been an accident of history, or perhaps only a chapter.

As the nearly all-white counties of the Great Plains empty out, American Indians are coming home, generating the only significant population gains in a wide stretch of the American midsection. At the same time, the frontier, as it was called when it was assumed that the land would soon be spotted with towns and farms, is actually larger than it has been since the early 20th century.

These changes have been under way for decades. But they have reached a point—108 years after Frederick Jackson Turner suggested that the American frontier was closed, with the buffalo herds wiped out and native populations down to a few tribes—that there are now more Indians and bison on the Plains than at any time since the late 1870's.

"What's happening is really quite astonishing," said Patricia Locke, a Lakota and Chippewa elder and a MacArthur Foundation fellow who returned to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation here several years ago. "It's like an evacuation one way, and a homecoming in the other."

Indians, of course, are still a fraction of the overall Plains population, making up just under 6 percent of the population in the state, Oklahoma, where they have the biggest population, 272,601 people.

But while many Plains counties lost 20 percent or more of their population, the overall Indian population grew by 20 percent in North Dakota, 23 percent in South Dakota, 18 percent in Montana, 20 percent in Nebraska and 12 percent in Kansas. Some of this can be attributed to better counting and higher birthrates, but tribal officials say there has been steady in-migration dating to the mid-1980's.

In North Dakota alone, 47 of the 53 counties lost population. Among the handful that gained people were three counties populated primarily by Indians.

In South Dakota, half of the counties lost people. But the second-fastest-growing county, Shannon, is in the heart of Indian country, on the Pine Ridge Reservation, a county that is 94 percent Indian and grew by 26 percent in the last census.

And much of Montana is nearly as open today as it was when Lewis and Clark explored there nearly 200 years ago. All but four of the counties in the flat eastern part of the state lost population; of those with gains, three contain Indian reservations.

"All of these numbers suggest that the experiment on much of the northern Plains with European agricultural settlement may soon be ending," said Myron Gutmann, a University of Texas professor who is an authority on Plains population trends.

As Indians have moved home, on or near reservation lands, whites have fled the counties that were opened to homesteading in the last of the great Western land rushes in the early 20th century.

The whitest county in the nation, Slope County, N.D., is down to 767 people; all but three of its residents are white. By contrast, in 1915, six years after the prairie was opened to ranchers and farmers through the Enlarged Homestead Act, Slope County was bustling, with 4,945 people. Now the county seat, Amidon, has 25 people, and the population density, less than one person per square mile, is well below the 19th-century Census Bureau definition of land that is vacant or wilderness.

Much of North Dakota has a ghostly feel to it: empty homesteads and occasional schoolhouses litter the land, with caved-in roofs and grass growing where there used to be front porches. The wind blows so hard that a cup of coffee brought outside develops whitecaps.

Cattle ranching and farming of wheat, barley and corn still prevail, especially on large corporate farms in the middle and southern plains. But in Slope, Hettinger, Adams, Grant, Burke, Divide, Garfield or any of the hundreds of other plains counties that seem to have one foot in the grave, land is being left to the wind and sparse rain.

In publicly owned prairie land, the native grasses and wildflowers have returned, and species like prairie dogs,
Population Shifts
Though counties across the Great Plains have lost population, the number of American Indians has risen.

Total population  Only loss shown

American Indians  Only gains shown

Source: Analysis of Census data by Andrew A. Beveridge, Queens College Sociology Department

black-footed ferrets, burrowing owls and bison have made comebacks. Much of this land will never be plowed again, for a third of the nation's 3.7 million acres of national grassland is designated roadless under a measure started by President Bill Clinton over the objections of many in the region's Congressional delegation. Other parts are managed by private groups like the Nature Conservancy, which has been buying up ranches and homesteads.

"I'm an old prairie guy, and it does my heart good to see so much of the Plains greening up again with native species," said Greg Schenbeck, a wildlife biologist with the grasslands division of the Forest Service. "And I tell you, people who come to visit are really excited—they talk about the expansiveness, the openness, the grass stretching to the horizon."

At the turn of the century, only a few hundred buffalo were left in the West. Now there are 300,000, and more than 30 tribes in the northern Plains are controlling large herds on land where bison, unlike cattle, need no help to flourish. A third of the nation's 31 accredited Indian colleges offer bison management.

"Just having these animals around, knowing what they meant to our ancestors, and bringing kids out to connect to them has been a big plus," said Mike Faith, who manages the bison herd on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation here, not far from where Sitting Bull was killed.

Indians have the highest rate of diabetes in the nation. Part of the overall restoration of the Plains is an effort to get bison meat, which is low in cholesterol and fat, back into the Indian diet.

"We're probably one of the few ethnic communities that have been blessed with a God-given creature to help restore us," said Donald Lake, director of the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative of Rapid City, S.D., a nonprofit group that works to repopulate Indian country with bison.

Mr. Lake, a Santee Sioux from Nebraska, has returned to the Plains after living for years in Los Angeles. He likes the slower pace, the connection to other Indians, the low prices. He winces at the description that the historian Turner used...
to describe frontier land as it became populated with Europeans. It was, Turner wrote, "the place where civilization meets savagery."

Many Indians have moved back to reservations because of jobs in the casinos, the so-called new buffalo, which have been the main economic salvation. On the Standing Rock Reservation, for example, the casino is the county's biggest job provider, employing 376 people, and it has expanded six times since it opened in 1993. But Indian reservations remain among the poorest places in the nation, with high unemployment, high out-of-wedlock birthrates and chronic drug and alcohol abuse.

Still, life has improved. Tourism has increased. People come to look at bison, tribal officials say; others pay up to $2,500 for the right to hunt them. People interested in the Plains tribes' history are also drawn to the prairie.

"Sitting Bull is one of the biggest names in the world, and he still has family here," said Elaine McLaughlin, the Standing Rock tribal secretary. "A lot of people in state government seem surprised when people show up from all over because they want to know more about Indians."

The re-emergence of a Great Plains of Indians and bison was foretold in 1987 by two Rutgers University professors, Frank J. Popper and his wife, Deborah E. Popper. They said white depopulation would accelerate, as it became clear that farming and building towns on the arid Plains was "the largest, longest-running agricultural and environmental miscalculation in American history."

They proposed a "Buffalo Commons" in the empty counties, an open range populated by the species that once thundered over the land. People throughout the prairie scorned their idea, and the Poppers became the objects of intense hatred. But their idea has been revived of late, with little rancor.

While the Poppers may ultimately be proved right in several respects, they were wrong in one major sense: In their vision, government would be the driving force, buying land and bringing buffalo back, then turning some of it over to Indians to manage.

Now, in a twist, it is government that keeps the white farming and ranching communities alive, through annual subsidies of more than $20 billion. Many historians have long argued that white settlement, particularly of the northern Plains, was largely government-induced from the start, through subsidies to railroads and homesteaders.

"If the government ever pulled out, the Buffalo Commons would come on like a storm," Mr. Popper said.

Indians and bison have returned by self-initiative and free enterprise, helped by the success of casinos.

"The people coming back, they get their degrees and they start their own businesses, or take jobs as teachers here on the reservation," said Anita Blue of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota, where the population in the Indian-dominated county grew 7.1 percent.

The idea of Manifest Destiny in reverse is scoffed at by many people, especially in the dying counties.

But a sense of irrevocable change pervades the northern Plains. "There is a lot of that Buffalo Commons idea that's probably true," said Gov. John Hoeven of North Dakota, a Republican elected on a pledge to revitalize the state. "It's never going to look like it did before, when all the farms and ranches were healthy."
An Introduction to Indian Nations in the United States

The Congress shall have power to... regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes...

Article I, Section 8
United States Constitution

Indian Nations had always been considered as distinct, independent political communities, retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil... The very term "nation" so generally applied to them, means "a people distinct from others."

Chief Justice John Marshall
United States Supreme Court
Worcester v. Georgia
31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 561 (1832)

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken away from them without their consent... but laws founded in justice and humanity shall from time to time be made, for preventing wrongs to them...

Article Three
Northwest Ordinance of 1789

TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

More than 561 federally recognized Indian Nations (variously called tribes, nations, bands, pueblos, communities and native villages) exist in the United States. About 227 of these are located in Alaska; the rest are located in 36 other states. Indian Nations are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse.

The United States Constitution recognizes that Indian Nations are sovereign governments just like Canada and California. Hundreds of treaties, the Supreme Court, the President and the Congress have repeatedly affirmed that Indian Nations retain their inherent powers of self-govern- ment. The treaties and laws have created a fundamental contract between Indian Nations and the United States: Indian Nations ceded millions of acres of land that made the United States what it is today, and in return received the guarantee of self-government on their own lands.

Tribal self-government serves the same purpose today as it always has: it empowers Indian Nations to remain viable as distinct groups of people. Tribal cultures enrich American life, and tribal economies provide opportunities where few would otherwise exist. Tribal governments provide a broad range of governmental services on tribal lands, including education, law enforcement, justice systems, and environmental protection and provide basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and public buildings.

The status of Indian Nations as a form of government is at the heart of nearly every issue that touches Indian Country. Self-government is essential if tribal communities are to continue to protect their unique cultures and identities. However, too few people are aware of the history and purpose of tribal self-government. Indian Nations are counting on your understanding and support to ensure that the United States maintains its commitments to tribal self-government.

BRIEF HISTORY OF FEDERAL POLICY TOWARD INDIAN NATIONS

To understand today's tribal governments, it is helpful to know the basic history of federal policy toward Indian nations:

Pre-1492 Pre-Columbian Period — Indian people lived in organized societies with their own forms of government for thousands of years before contact with Europeans.

1492-1828 Colonial Period — The proliferation of European colonies created a dominant presence on the East Coast of North America. These colonies acquired some Indian lands under the doctrine of discovery and also signed treaties with the tribes for additional land. Colonial governments treated
Indian tribes as governments, setting the precedent for future relations. Following the Revolutionary War, the newborn United States took pains to maintain peace and diplomatic relations with neighboring tribes.

1828–1887 Removal, Reservation and Treaty Period —As the U.S. population and military strength grew, so did pressure by the U.S. government on eastern tribes to move west, resulting in forced migration (i.e., Trail of Tears). Seeking to obtain more Indian land the U.S. government embarked on an aggressive military policy throughout the West, relocating tribes to Indian reservations. In general, reservations were established through treaties, trading large tracts of land for the continued right of tribal self-governance on the reservations under the protection of the United States.

1887–1934 Allotment and Assimilation Period —Settlers’ increasing desire for the land within reservations and the push to assimilate Indians into mainstream American life led to the General Allotment Act of 1887. This Act (also known as the Dawes Act) dictated the forced conversion of communally held tribal lands into small parcels for individual Indian ownership. More than 90 million acres—nearly two-thirds of reservation land—were taken from tribes and given to settlers, most without compensation to the tribes.

1934–1945 Indian Reorganization Period —The federal government, under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, ended the discredited policy of allotment. It began to restore Indian lands to tribes and attempted to help tribes reform their governments. The federal government created programs and projects to rehabilitate Indian economic life. These efforts were critical in re-establishing tribal economies and formed a basis for renewed tribal autonomy, but too often forced European/Anglo-values and government structures upon tribes, thereby damaging traditional values and governance.

1945–1968 Termination Period —Congress decided that federal recognition and assistance to more than 100 tribes should be terminated. Public Law 280, passed in 1953, imposed state criminal and civil jurisdiction on many tribes in California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon and Wisconsin. These policies created economic disaster for many tribes, resulting in millions of acres of valuable natural resource land being lost through tax forfeiture sales. Federal policy emphasized the physical relocation of Indians from reservations to urban areas.

1968–Present Self-Determination Period —A resurgence of tribal government activity in Congress and in the federal courts ended the termination era and pushed U.S. policy toward self-determination and self-governance. Policies emerged that favored tribal control over their destinies. With control over their lands and resources, tribes have made great strides toward reversing the economic blight that resulted from previous federal policies, and have revived their unique cultures and societies. Under the self-determination and self-governance acts, tribal governments manage many federal programs that are intended to serve Indian people.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

The essence of tribal sovereignty is the ability to govern and to protect the health, safety and welfare of tribal citizens within tribal territory. Tribes are separate and distinct peoples with unique histories that predate the United States as a political entity. Recognition of and respect for tribal sovereignty has strong roots that date to the earliest contact between the indigenous peoples of North America and the first European settlers. Settlers and the tribal leaders dealt with each other as separate sovereigns, and that relationship is the foundation of all interactions that have taken place between the United States and Indian tribes throughout the history of the nation. This policy of respect for tribal sovereignty is found in the U.S. Constitution, Nation-to-Nation treaties, federal statutes, case law, executive orders and other administrative policies.

Just as the United States deals with states as governments, it also deals with Indian tribes as governments, not as special interest groups, individuals or some other type of non-governmental entity. Many state governments also have explicitly recognized the governmental status of Indian tribes through various state recognition processes.

Tribal governments have the inherent right to develop their own form of government, to determine their own citizenship, to establish their own civil and criminal laws and be ruled by them in tribal courts, to tax, to license and regulate, and to exclude people from tribal lands. Tribal governments are responsible for a broad range of governmental activities on tribal lands, including education; law enforcement; justice systems; environmental protection; and basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, sewers, solid waste treatment and disposal, and public buildings.
Congress and the federal courts have placed some significant limitations on the exercise of tribal sovereignty, particularly with regard to jurisdiction over non-Indians. For example, tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians on criminal matters was sharply limited in the 1978 Supreme Court decision in Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe. However, federal law is particularly protective of tribes' authority over internal matters and their ability to protect the health and welfare of their people. Tribal sovereignty is inherent in the status of Indian tribes, and the law assumes that tribes have sovereign authority unless a federal statute has specifically removed that authority or a federal court has determined that the tribe’s exercise of authority is completely inconsistent with tribal status within the federal framework.

The status of Indian Nations as governments and the preservation and protection of tribal history, language, culture and traditions are often misunderstood or not considered by the non-Indian community. However, this relationship can be summed up very simply. Self-government is essential for tribal communities to continue to protect their unique cultures and identities, and in turn tribal cultures and traditions provide the foundation upon which Indian communities are governed.

TREATIES

When European settlers came to America, they dealt with the tribes as sovereigns and often negotiated treaties. Exchanges of land and guarantees of peace were handled by treaty. The U.S. government continued to deal with the tribes through treaties until after the Revolutionary War.

Hundreds of treaties between Indian Nations and the United States have been negotiated by the President and ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. Indian treaties have the same status as treaties with foreign nations. Because such treaties are made under the U.S. Constitution, they take precedence over any conflicting state law. The Supreme Court upholds terms of the treaties, although the Court has ruled that Congress may unilaterally abrogate treaties. However, Congress must show a “clear and plain” intent to abrogate a treaty (Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock, 1903).

Treaties vary widely in their terms and provisions. They commonly included a guarantee of peace, a provision on land boundaries, a guarantee of hunting and fishing rights (often including lands outside the reservation boundaries) and a statement that the tribe recognized the authority of the United States and, in return, received a promise from the United States of protection. In addition, many treaties contain specific promises of federally provided health care, education, housing, economic development and agricultural assistance. The federal government has never adequately funded these treaty provisions.

Indian treaty making effectively ended in 1871 when Congress passed a legislative rider that attempted to limit the power of the president to enter into treaties with Indian Nations. Although this legislation is of questionable constitutionality, it nevertheless made clear that no further treaties would be ratified. As a result, not all tribes have a treaty. Although the U.S. Senate did ratify 370 Indian treaties between 1778 and 1871, at least another 45 were negotiated with tribes but never considered for ratification. As determined by the U.S. Court of Claims, some of these unratified treaties have taken legal effect. After official treaty making ended, many tribes have been federally recognized through executive order or statute.

TRUST RELATIONSHIP

The federal trust responsibility, one of the most important doctrines in federal Indian law, derives from the treaties and the European law of nations. It is the obligation of the federal government to protect tribal self-governance, tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and to carry out the directions of federal statutes and court cases.

The Supreme Court has defined the trust responsibility as “moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust” (Seminole Nation v. United States, 1942).

The trust responsibility can be broadly divided into two interrelated areas. The property-oriented trust duties concentrate upon a narrow but important aspect of the federal trust responsibility: protecting tribal property and assets where the title is held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the tribe. The second, more fundamental, federal trust obligation is to honor the federal guarantee of self-government and the promise that tribal lands must be preserved as the base for separate tribal cultures. A permanent tribal community requires a secure land base to function upon and govern, water to irrigate the land, access to fish and game, and income from timber and mineral development. The federal trustee is under an obligation to protect those resources.

The trust responsibility has also been acknowledged in the Snyder Act of 1921, which requires that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior Department, “to direct, supervise, and expend such moneys as Congress may from time to time appropriate, for the benefit, care and assistance of Indians throughout the United States” for several purposes, including education; health; economic development and profitability of Indian property; development and maintenance of Indian water supplies and buildings; the hiring of government officials, physicians, Indian police, and Indian judges; and the suppression of drug and alcohol trafficking.
THE STRUCTURE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Traditional tribal governments existed long before European contact and have evolved over time. The 561 federally recognized tribes in the United States today have governments that are diverse in structure and in decision-making processes. Because some tribal constitutions were patterned after the model constitution developed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs—in response to the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934—some similarities exist among tribal governments. These standard tribal constitutions contain provisions describing tribal territory, specifying eligibility for citizenship, and establishing the governing bodies and their powers.

Most tribes give legislative authority to a tribal council. In some tribes, the tribal counsel members are elected by district; in others, they are elected at large. The council generally has authority to write tribal laws, and in some tribes the council members have administrative duties. Most tribal constitutions also provide for an executive officer, called a tribal chairman, president, governor or chief. In some tribes, the tribal council elects the chief executive, while in others the voting citizens directly elect him or her. In most cases, the duties and powers of the chief executive are not specified in the constitution, but are set in the bylaws. Consequently, the role of the chief executive varies greatly among tribes. Many tribes also have created their own court systems that administer codes passed by the tribal council. In many tribes, judges are elected by popular vote; in others, judges are appointed by the tribal council.

About 60 percent of tribal governments are based on IRA constitutions. Tribes that have chosen other structures and constitutions frequently have made the decision to do so in favor of a government that is more traditional to the tribe, and do not necessarily follow the pattern outlined above. Such governments are diverse and range from the Navajo Nation to the pueblos of New Mexico. The Navajo Nation has no written constitution, but operates under a detailed tribal code and has an elected council and president. Many of the pueblos operate entirely under unwritten customary law, with traditional leadership and a completely different government structure.

TRIBAL LANDS

Land is of great spiritual and cultural significance to Indian tribes, and many Indian communities continue to rely upon the land for subsistence through hunting, fishing and gathering. Land-based production such as agriculture, forestry, mining, and oil and gas production play a prominent role in tribal economies. Moreover, Indian lands are critical for the exercise of tribal self-governance and self-determination.

Between 1887 and 1934, the U.S. government took more than 90 million acres—nearly two-thirds of reservation lands—from the tribes and gave it to settlers, most often without compensation to the tribes. In addition, the termination era of the 1940s and 1950s resulted in the loss of huge amounts of reservation land.

Today, Indian tribes hold more than 50 million acres of land, approximately two percent of the United States. Most of these lands are in arid and remote regions. The largest reservation—the Navajo Nation—covers an area as large as West Virginia. Some reservations are as small as a few acres, and some tribes hold no land at all. With the exception of Metlakatla in Southeast Alaska, no reservations exist in that state. Alaska Native lands title is outlined in the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act of 1971.

Trust Lands

Title to most tribal lands is held by the federal government in trust for the benefit of current and future generations of tribal citizens. Most often, this land is within the boundaries of a reservation. Although trust land falls under tribal government authority and generally is not subject to state laws, it also is subject to limitations on the use of the land and requires federal approval for most actions. As a result of allotment, a great deal of land is held in trust status for individuals.

Under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, the federal government and the tribes can place additional land in trust in order to "...conserve and develop Indian lands and resources" and to rehabilitate Indian economic life. This land is usually purchased by the tribe or acquired from federal surplus lands. Trust status can be conferred only by the Secretary of Interior or the U.S. Congress.

Since 1934, the Secretary of Interior has taken about 9 million acres back into trust status—about 10 percent of the total amount of land lost. The vast majority of reacquired lands have been within the boundaries of existing reservations. However, it is sometimes necessary for tribes to acquire land outside reservation boundaries. This is particularly true for tribes that have extremely small reservations, for those in remote areas far from the mainstream of economic life, and for those tribes where reservations were diminished during the allotment or termination periods.

Regulations require that the Secretary notify and consider the views of state and local governments before making a determination on taking land into trust status. The secretary must specifically consider the effect on state and local governments of removal of the land from the tax rolls. State and local governments have the right to appeal a secretarial decision both within the Department of Interior and in the federal courts.
Native American Tribes of the United States

FACTS:
- There are 561 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. 227 of these tribes are located in Alaska.
- The American Indian & Alaska Native population totals 2.3 million.
- Between 1887 and 1934, the U.S. Government took over 90 million acres of land from tribes without compensation.
- The largest reservation in the U.S. is the Navajo Nation.
- The smallest reservation is less than one acre.

Much stricter limitations exist on placing land into trust if that land is to be used by a tribal government for gaming purposes. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (25 U.S.C. § 2719) prohibits gaming on off-reservation lands that were acquired in trust after 1988, unless the Governor of the state concurs and the Secretary determines that gaming would not be detrimental to the surrounding community.

Non-Indian Fee Lands
One of the chief issues regarding Indian lands is the effect of former federal land policies—including allotment—that left many tribes with reservations that are scattered and fractionated and intermixed with lands held by non-Indians. This land-holding pattern, often called “checkerboarding,” creates two primary problems. The first is that it may render the tribal land base unusable for agriculture, grazing, timber or mining.
The second problem that arises is the jurisdiction over non-Indian fee land within reservation boundaries. Some non-Indians do not want a tribal government to have jurisdiction over their land, and tribal governments resent the intrusion of state jurisdiction within tribal boundaries. In general, the Supreme Court has confirmed the authority of tribal governments to exercise civil authority over the conduct of non-Indians on fee lands within a reservation when that conduct threatens the political integrity, the economic security, or the health and welfare of the tribe (Montana vs. U.S., 1981). In practice, jurisdictional matters on checkerboard lands call for a high level of coordination and the development of cooperative agreements between tribal, state and local officials.

**TAXATION**

There are a number of common misunderstandings about tax issues in Indian Country. It should be made clear that individual American Indians and Alaska Natives and their businesses pay federal income tax just like all other Americans. The exception is that the income an Indian receives directly from a treaty or trust resource such as fish or timber is not federally taxed. States cannot tax tribal citizens who live on and derive their income from tribal lands, but those who work or live outside tribal lands generally are subject to state income, sales and other taxes.

Tribal government revenues are not taxed, just like state and local government revenues are not. This is a longstanding federal policy with Constitutional support that protects the ability to raise revenue for government functions. Like state and local governments, tribal governments use their revenues to provide essential services for their citizens. Unlike state governments, tribal governments are not in a position to levy property or income taxes. Income from natural resources and tribal businesses are most often the only non-federal revenue source.

States cannot directly tax a tribal government. The Supreme Court has held that state governments can collect excise taxes on sales of imported products to non-members that occur on tribal lands, so long as the tax does not fall directly on the tribal government. In practice, this has resulted in the inequity of “dual taxation” where tribes are prevented from collecting their own sales taxes because of the resulting double tax burden, and the state tax revenue flows exclusively off-reservation. States and tribes have developed a variety of methods for addressing this inequity, often through intergovernmental agreements or through state statutes.

**INDIAN GAMING**

Like state and local governments, tribes use revenues from gaming as a tax base to fund essential services such as education, law enforcement, tribal courts, health care, social services and infrastructure improvement. In fact, Indian tribes are required by federal law to use their gaming revenues for such purposes. Tribal government gaming—enterprises run by government entities to raise revenues for essential government functions—is more akin to state lotteries than to commercial for-profit businesses. (37 of the 50 states now have lotteries.)

The media coverage of tribal gaming has left the impression that all Indian tribes have grown rich on casino money and that poverty has been eradicated in Indian communities. In fact, only a small number of Indian tribes have found economic success through gaming. Of the 561 tribes, only 198 are engaged in gaming, and 22 of those tribes collect 56 percent of the revenue. In reality, gaming has done little to change the depressed economic conditions found on most reservations.

Tribal government gaming began in the early 1980's at about the same time that state lotteries began to proliferate. In 1987, the Supreme Court relied on fundamental federal Indian law in ruling that if state law criminally prohibits a form of gambling, then the tribes within the state may not engage in that activity. However, if state law merely regulates but does not criminally prohibit a form of gambling, then tribes within the state may engage in that gaming free of state control. In 1998, Congress formally recognized but limited the right of Indians to conduct gaming with the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). IGRA created the National Indian Gaming Commission to regulate Indian gaming. IGRA generally allows tribes to conduct Class II games such as bingo, so long as not criminally prohibited by the state. For Class III casino gaming, however, tribes first must negotiate compacts with states concerning the games to be played and the regulation required for the games.

A number of factors have significantly restricted the growth of tribal gaming. Like other communities in the U.S., many tribes have chosen not to engage in gaming no matter how lucrative it may be. Location and demographics are also a severe limiting factor on tribal gaming. Most Indian reservations are located in remote areas with little access to gaming customers. State laws and state failure to negotiate compacts have also severely limited the development of tribal gaming. In states such as Utah where gaming is criminally prohibited, no tribal gaming has developed. States such as Oklahoma have criminal laws that limit many tribes to bingo only. A smaller number of states have used the compacting requirement in IGRA in a divisive way to completely block the development of tribal gaming. Under IGRA, the federal government has an obligation to mediate these disputes, but so far has failed to fulfill this obligation.
Where Indian gaming has been successful, it has had a huge beneficial economic impact on Indian communities and surrounding communities. It has provided hundreds of thousands of jobs for Indian and non-Indians, and paid millions of dollars in payroll taxes and other direct benefits to state and local governments. Many tribes engaged in gaming have not found this great success, but have been able to create successful small businesses that provide a moderate amount of revenue. However, for most tribes Indian gaming has not been an answer to their tremendous needs.

Recently, we have heard foes of gaming call to “stop the expansion of Indian gaming.” Any efforts to limit tribes’ sovereign right to raise revenue through gaming (just as 37 state governments do) should be strongly opposed. However, there is one legitimate way to address the expansion of Indian gaming without trampling on tribal sovereignty: that is to fully fund federal programs for Indian tribal governments. Tribal governments have pursued gaming as a source of revenue because the federal government has never fulfilled its obligations to provide basic services. Faced with devastating third world conditions, tribes have turned to gaming as a necessary means of survival. If the federal government were meeting its obligations, fewer tribal governments would find it necessary to exercise their rights to enter into gaming. This is a result that everyone can support.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATE GOVERNMENTS AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

The U.S. Constitution gives exclusive authority in Indian affairs to the federal government, not to the state governments. Tribal governments are not subservient to state governments, and retain the right to create laws that are stricter or more lenient than state laws. State laws cannot be applied where they interfere with the right of a tribe to make its own laws protecting the health and welfare of its citizens, or where it would interfere with any federal interest. In general, states may regulate only on matters that are exclusive to non-Indians and that do not affect tribal interests. In some limited instances, the federal government has delegated federal authority on Indian lands to the states.

The analysis of state-tribal relations often is described as a jurisdictional battle over when and how the state may regulate on tribal lands. However, this view of tribal-state relations is incomplete. With far less publicity, tribal governments and state governments for many decades have found ways to cooperate on a broad range of regulatory matters. Most often, the cooperation is in the form of an intergovernmental agreement, a state statute, or an informal arrangement regarding which government will cover certain functions.

DECENTRALIZATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO TRIBES AND STATES

Decentralization is the transfer of resources, responsibilities, and authorities, often through federal block grants or other funding mechanisms, to state, local or tribal governments. This shifting of power and authority away from the federal government is intended to “bring government closer to the people,” and make government more responsive to local needs. Whether termed “decentralization,” “local control,” “devolution,” or “state’s rights,” the response to local needs is much more difficult to accomplish through a large federal bureaucracy. In recent years, service programs (welfare reform, child care, and social support) and environmental programs have been increasingly devolved from the federal government to states and tribes.

Decentralization disproportionately affects tribal governments. Depending on the mechanism through which programs are devolved (generally through federal law), tribal governments may or may not be recognized as units of government with authority to directly receive the resources and administer the specific program. Although some authorizing laws—like many environmental laws and the welfare reform law—recognize tribal governments as capable program administrators, other federal laws do not. For instance, sections of the Social Security Act authorize only state governments to administer Medicaid, Medicare and Children’s Health Insurance Programs. Even when tribes are authorized to administer programs similar to state programs, tribes often are afforded proportionally fewer resources and subjected to greater oversight than are states.

In the early stages of the current decentralization trend, many tribal governments and the federal government embraced the concept of shifting federal programs and services to tribal control. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 gave Indian tribes the authority to contract for federal resources and administer federal programs as a basic exercise of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Since 1975, the self-determination programs have been expanded several times, and the Self-Governance Act of 1994 gave tribes even greater flexibility in reprogramming Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services resources to meet tribal needs. The premise of the self-determination and self-governance programs is that tribal governments have the option to negotiate an agreement to receive federal resources and perform services themselves.

This ability of each tribe to negotiate an arrangement that will meet its unique needs is key to the success of the self-determination and self-governance policies; it is lacking in other forms of federal decentralization.
Decentralization policies also raise questions about the federal trust and treaty responsibilities to tribes and the reduction of federal oversight and concern for tribal needs. The trust responsibility is the obligation of the federal government to protect tribal self-governance, tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and generally to ensure that the basic needs of tribal communities are met. The self-determination and self-governance acts clearly guard the federal trust responsibility, but other forms of federal decentralization do not. Because of the inconsistent history of federal Indian policy, tribes are hesitant to rely upon policies that attempt to make them self-sufficient. Such policies often have been accompanied by efforts to remove the federal protection of tribal self-government and the federal responsibility for tribal needs.

So, while tribal governments generally welcome the opportunity for increased authority and flexibility, they also question the long-term effects of decentralization policies and their differential acknowledgement of tribal governments. As a result, tribal acceptance of devolved programs has varied greatly. Tribes generally desire that both the federal and the state governments give greater consideration to tribal self-government and unique tribal needs as devolved programs are developed and implemented.

In the era of decentralization, state and tribal governments have many common interests and communication and collaboration are increasingly necessary. Both states and tribes have wrestled with the new responsibilities and federal limitations, and have consistently sought greater flexibility. Tribes and states have a great interest in collaborating to ensure that services are efficiently provided and in minimizing service overlap. Adequate resources to provide services also are of mutual concern, particularly because fixed federal block grants may be inadequate in times of economic distress or downturn. Finally, many programs have limited flexibility, unrealistic programmatic performance measures, lack administrative resources, and have overly burdensome reporting requirements; all which are problematic for both states and tribes.

For decentralized federal policies to work well in Indian Country, they will need to maintain federal baseline standards that protect the federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Indian Nations, further the policy of tribal self-government, and build on the government-to-government relationships between the federal government, the states and the tribes. These include policies such as the following:

- Tribal governments must be provided with adequate support for administration of programs.
- Policies should also specifically continue to protect federal treaty and trust responsibilities.
- In situations where tribal governments opt not to administer particular programs or functions, state or county governments that directly administer, or provide oversight to private contractors, must consult with tribes over the delivery of services to their tribal members. Level and range of service delivery to tribal members must also be equivalent to services in other parts of the state, should be integrated with other tribal programs, and should be sensitive to unique tribal needs.
- States must be encouraged through federal policy to relate with tribal governments on a “government-to-government” basis, and not merely on the same terms as private contractors.
- Federal policies should encourage the use of negotiated agreements between states and tribes so that they can address unique needs and service issues. Federal standards must give tribes the ability to reach a successful and enforceable agreement.
- Tribal governments should have a right to relevant documentation or studies and should have access to independent experts as needed during assessment or negotiation.

ANSWERS TO SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT INDIAN NATIONS

Why are Indian tribal citizens treated differently than racial minority groups such as African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and others?

American Indians and Alaska Natives are members or citizens of tribal governments. The tribal government has a unique legal and political relationship with the federal government, and the U.S. government provides certain services because the person is a citizen of the tribe. American Indians and Alaska Natives also are citizens of the United States and their states, with rights to vote and run for office.

What are the requirements for tribal citizenship?

Like any government, tribal governments determine their own criteria for citizenship. Usually there is some blood quantum requirement, such as 1/4, or a requirement of lineal descendancy from a tribal citizen. Individual tribes can answer specific questions. Some federal agencies also have criteria for determining eligibility for programs and services. About 2.3 million Native people in the United States are enrolled citizens of federally recognized tribes.
Why do tribes have immunity from lawsuits?

Government or sovereign immunity applies to state, local and federal—as well as tribal—governments. Government immunity protects government funds and discretionary government functions. Like other governments, tribes provide for insurance and limited waivers of their sovereign immunity, taking responsibility for the actions of tribal employees. No government could successfully operate without sovereign immunity to protect the discretionary actions of government officials.

What laws serve to protect tribal cultures?

The preservation and protection of tribal history, language, culture, and traditions is a major issue of concern throughout Indian Country. Tribal cultures and traditions provide the foundation and the roots upon which Indian communities will grow in the 21st Century. A number of laws protect native cultures and attempt to correct some of the damages from the past. These include, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the 1992 Tribal Amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Native American Languages Act (NALA), as well as Executive Order #13007 on Native American Sacred Sites, and Executive Order #13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Tribal Governments.

What is the economic condition of Indian Nations?

The need for sustained economic growth is critically acute in most Indian communities across the country. Indian reservations have a 31 percent poverty rate—the highest poverty rate in America. Indian unemployment is approximately 46 percent. Indian health, education and income statistics are the worst in the country. The vast majority of tribes are mired in a severe economic depression caused by decades of oppression. Tribes are struggling to achieve economic stability and self-sufficiency and using the growing tools of self-governance. It is a moral imperative that economic development and job growth in Indian communities become a top priority in U.S. policy.

Does the federal government provide all the necessary funding for Indian tribes?

Like state governments, tribal governments receive some federal funding for the programs they operate. The federal government has an obligation to tribal governments that is based on numerous treaties and on the overall trust responsibility. Despite these obligations, federal funding is inadequate, as are the services and infrastructure of many tribal governments on Indian reservations. InCREASED funding for services and infrastructure on Indian reservations must be provided to ensure that basic needs are met and to build the foundation for a stronger economic base in Indian Country.

Does the federal government pay all expenses—health care, housing and college tuition—for individual Indians?

In general, no. The federal government provides basic health care for all Indian people through the Indian Health Service. Unfortunately, these health programs have been inadequately funded for many decades, and Indian people have the worst health status of any group in the country. The Department of Housing and Urban Services provides some housing on Indian reservations, but Indians have the highest rate of homelessness and overcrowding. The federal government provides some educational assistance to tribal colleges, but higher education generally is not provided and remains beyond the reach of most Indian people.

Does the federal government pay for Indian education?

There are approximately 600,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students attending K–12 programs in the United States. 450,000 of these attend public schools while 50,000 attend BIA funded schools. Funding for Indian education schools is the sole responsibility of the federal government while both state and federal resources provide public education funding. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and their surrounding communities also have the ability to pass bond initiatives in order to build or repair local school buildings. Tribal and BIA schools, on the other hand, must rely on the federal government to ensure their academic and construction needs are being met. The extent to which the federal government has assumed this responsibility can be exemplified in the backlog of construction and repair/renovations needs now exceeding $800 million. Annual appropriations for Indian schools historically target less than ten percent of the total need requirement.

Does the federal government pay for law enforcement?

The federal government maintains most public safety and criminal justice systems in Indian Country. However, as with most Indian programs, federal funding law enforcement is insufficient. The level of law enforcement services that many Americans take for granted rarely exists on or near Indian lands. There are only 2,380 BIA and tribal uniformed officers available to serve an estimated 1.4 million Indians covering over 56 million acres of tribal lands in the lower 48 states. On tribal lands, 1.3 officers must serve every 1,000 citizens, compared to 2.9 officers per 1,000 cit-
izens in non-Indian communities under 10,000. A total of at least 4,290 sworn officers are needed in Indian Country to provide a minimum level of coverage enjoyed by most of America.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARD INDIAN NATIONS?

As the history of federal policy toward Indian Nations illustrates, federal protection of Indian tribes is never secure. In the 1990's, there has been an increase in the amount of hostile legislation toward the exercise of tribal self-government. A variety of legislation has surfaced in the U.S. Congress that would cripple the tribes' ability to provide basic government functions and services, exercise legal jurisdiction, enforce treaty rights, recover land or raise revenues for government functions—even to continue age-old hunting and fishing practices. This hostile legislation threatens to end tribes' ability to function, and would effectively force tribal members to flee their homes and communities.

Even more devastating for Indian Nations are the methods for this unjustified legislation. Most often a handful of special interests try to use “budget riders” to undermine tribal self-government rights. These “riders” are tucked into a spending bill thousands of pages long, hidden from public scrutiny. At the very least, Indian Nations should be able to have a fair and open debate on their issues.

Tribal self-governance is modern, democratic, fair and deserving of respect. In addition to being culturally and historically rich, tribal governments are good neighbors and good partners in economic development. It is up to each of us to become informed about tribal governments and help to protect them. The indigenous people of this great country are depending on your efforts, your conscience, and your support.

CONTACTING TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

The over 561 tribal governments are too numerous to list for the purposes of this brief booklet, but a complete list of federally recognized tribes with addresses and phone numbers is available on the NCAI web site at www.ncai.org.

Tribal governments themselves are the fundamental source of authority in Indian Country. NCAI would urge you to contact them directly if you have a concern or question. NCAI and other organizations can serve as a resource, but we are no substitute for direct communication with tribal governments.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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RESOURCES

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<tr>
<th>National Tribal Organizations</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian Higher Education Council</td>
<td>(703) 838.0400</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aihec.org">www.aihec.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian Resources Institute</td>
<td>(510) 834.9333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tuscaroras.com/ais">www.tuscaroras.com/ais</a></td>
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<td>American Indian Society</td>
<td>(804) 448.3707</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ai.org">www.ai.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Americans for Indian Opportunity</td>
<td>(505) 867.0278</td>
<td><a href="http://www.firstnations.org">www.firstnations.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Council of Energy Resource Tribes</td>
<td>(303) 282.7576</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nativeworkforce.org">www.nativeworkforce.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>First Nations Development Institute</td>
<td>(540) 371.5615</td>
<td><a href="http://www.IndianLaw.org">www.IndianLaw.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Law Resource Center</td>
<td>(202) 547.2800</td>
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<td>Intertribal Agricultural Council</td>
<td>(406) 259.3525</td>
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<td>Intertribal Timber Council</td>
<td>(503) 282.4296</td>
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<td>Intertribal Transportation Association</td>
<td>(405) 372.0303</td>
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Government-to-government: Federal agencies in particular have a responsibility to deal directly with tribes under the government-to-government relationship. Direct consultation and coordination with tribal governments is instructed by a November 7, 2000 Presidential Executive Order.

Key Federal Government Contacts

Department of Agriculture, Director of Native American Programs
Department of Health & Human Services
Indian Health Service
Administration for Native American

Phone                      Web address
(202) 720.3805              www.dhhs.gov
(202) 690.7000              www.ihs.gov
(301) 443.1083              www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ana
Department of Housing & Urban Development, Office of Native American Programs
(202) 401.7914 www.codetalk.gov
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
(202) 208.3711 www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html
Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Program
(202) 343.4100 www.nps.gov
Department of Justice, Office of Tribal Justice
(202) 514.8812 www.usdoj.gov/otj/index.html
Department of Labor, Division of Indian & Native American Programs
(202) 693.3814 www.wdosc.org/dinap
Environmental Protection Agency, American Indian Environmental Office
(202) 260.7939 www.epa.gov/indian
National Indian Gaming Commission
(202) 632.7003 www.nigc.gov
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of the American Indian
(212) 514.3700/ www.si.edu/nmai
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
(202) 224.2251 www.senate.gov/~scia/
U.S. House of Representatives Native American Caucus
(202) 225.0991
U.S. House of Representatives, Resources Committee
(202) 225.2761 www.house.gov/resources
"Gee, You Don’t Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation"

Barbara Cameron

One of the very first words I learned in my Lakota language was was-icu, which designates white people. At that early age, my comprehension of wasicu was gained from observing and listening to my family discussing the wasicu. My grandmother always referred to white people as the “wasicu sica” with emphasis on sica, our word for terrible or bad. By the age of five I had seen one Indian man gunned down in the back by the police and was a silent witness to a gang of white teenage boys beating up an elderly Indian man. I’d hear stories of Indian ranch hands being “accidentally” shot by white ranchers. I quickly began to understand the wasicu menace my family spoke of.

My hatred for the wasicu was solidly implanted by the time I entered first grade. Unfortunately in first grade I became teacher’s pet so my teacher had a fondness for hugging me, which always repulsed me. I couldn’t stand the idea of a white person touching me. Eventually I realized that it wasn’t the white skin that I hated, but it was their culture of deceit, greed, racism, and violence.

During my first memorable visit to a white town, I was appalled that they thought of themselves as superior to my people. Their manner of living appeared devoid of life and bordered on hostility even for one another. They were separated from each other by their perfectly, politely fenced square plots of green lawn. The only lawns on my reservation were the lawns of the BIA* officials or white Christians. The white people always seemed so loud, obnoxious, and vulgar. And the white parents were either screaming at their kids, threatening them with some form of punishment or hitting them. After spending a day around white people, I was always happy to go back to the reservation where people followed a relaxed yet respectful code of relating with each other. The easy teasing and joking that were inherent with the Lakota were a welcome relief after a day with the plastic faces.

I vividly remember two occasions during my childhood in which I was cognizant of being an Indian. The first time was at about three years of age when my family took me to my first pow-wow. I kept asking my grandmother, “Where are the Indians? Where are the Indians? Are they going to have bows and arrows?” I was very curious and strangely excited about the prospect of seeing real live Indians even though I myself was one. It’s a memory that has remained with me through all these years because it’s so full of the subtleties of my culture. There was a sweet wonderful aroma in the air from the dancers and from the traditional food booths. There were lots of grandmothers and grandfathers with young children running about. Powwows in the Plains usually last for three days, sometimes longer, with Indian people traveling from all parts of our country to dance, to share food and laughter, and to be with each other. I could sense the importance of our gathering times and it was the beginning of my awareness that my people are a great and different nation.
The second time in my childhood when I knew very clearly that I am Indian occurred when I was attending an all-white (except for me) elementary school. During Halloween my friends and I went trick or treating. At one of the last stops, the mother knew all of the children except for me. She asked me to remove my mask so she could see who I was. After I removed my mask, she realized I was an Indian and quite cruelly told me so, refusing to give me the treats my friends had received. It was a.strikingly painful experience.

I told my mother about it the next evening after I tried to understand it. My mother was outraged and explained the realities of being an Indian in South Dakota. My mother paid a visit to the woman, which resulted in their expressing a barrage of equal hatred for one another. I remember sitting in our pick-up hearing the intensity of the anger and feeling very sad that my mother had to defend her child to someone who wasn’t worthy of her presence.

I spent a part of my childhood feeling great sadness and helplessness about how it seemed that Indians were open game for the white people, to kill, maim, beat up, insult, rape, cheat, or whatever atrocity the white people wanted to play with. There was also a rage and frustration that has not died. When I look back on reservation life, it seems that I spent a great deal of time attending the funerals of my relatives or friends of my family. During one year I went to funerals of four murder victims. Most of my non-Indian friends have not seen a dead body or have not been to a funeral. Death was so common on the reservation that I did not understand the implications of the high death rate until after I moved away and was surprised to learn that I’ve seen more dead bodies than my friends will probably ever see in their lifetime.

Because of experiencing racial violence, I sometimes panic when I’m the only non-white in a roomful of whites, even if they are my closest friends; I wonder if I’ll leave the room alive. The seemingly copacetic gay world of San Francisco becomes a mere dream after the panic leaves. I think to myself that it’s truly insane for me to feel the panic. I want to scream out my anger and disgust with myself for feeling distrustful of my white friends and I want to banish the society that has fostered those feelings of alienation. I wonder at the amount of assimilation which has affected me and how long my “Indianness” will allow me to remain in a city that is far removed from the lives of many Native Americans.

“Alienation” and “assimilation” are two common words used to describe contemporary Indian people. I’ve come to despise those two words because what leads to “alienation” and “assimilation” should not be so concisely defined. And I generally mistrust words that are used to define Native Americans and Brown People. I don’t like being put under a magnifying glass and having cute liberal terms describe who I am. The “alienation” or “assimilation” that I manifest is often in how I speak. There isn’t necessarily a third world language but there is an Indian way of talking that is an essential part of me. I like it, I love it, yet I deny it. I “save” it for when I’m around other Indians. It is a way of talking that involves “Indian humor” which I know for sure non-Indian people would not necessarily understand.

Articulate. Articulate. I’ve heard that word used many times to describe third world people. White people seem so surprised to find brown people who can speak fluent English and are even perhaps educated. We then become “articulate.” I think I spend a lot of time being articulate with white people. Or as one person said to me a few years ago, “Gee, you don’t seem like an Indian from the reservation.”

I often read about the dilemmas of contemporary Indians caught between the white and Indian worlds. For most of us, it is an uneasy balance to maintain. Sometimes some of us are not so successful with it. Native Americans have a very high suicide rate.
When I was about 20, I dreamt of myself at the age of 25-26, standing at a place on my reservation, looking to the North, watching a glorious, many-colored horse galloping toward me from the sky. My eyes were riveted and attracted to the beauty and overwhelming strength of the horse. The horse’s eyes were staring directly into mine, hypnotizing me and holding my attention. Slowly from the East, an eagle was gliding toward the horse. My attention began to be drawn toward the calm of the eagle but I still did not want to lose sight of the horse. Finally the two met with the eagle sailing into the horse causing it to disintegrate. The eagle flew gently on.

I take this prophetic dream as an analogy of my balance between the white [horse] and Indian [eagle] worlds. Now that I am 26, I find that I’ve gone as far into my exploration of the white world as I want. It doesn’t mean that I’m going to run off to live in a tipi. It simply means that I’m not interested in pursuing a society that uses analysis, research, and experimentation to concretize their vision of cruel destinies for those who are not bastards of the Pilgrims; a society with arrogance rising, moon in oppression, and sun in destruction.

Racism is not easy for me to write about because of my own racism toward other people of color, and because of a complex set of “racisms” within the Indian community. At times animosity exists between half-breed, full-blood, light-skinned Indians, dark-skinned Indians, and non-Indians who attempt to pass as Indians. The U.S. government has practiced for many years its divisiveness in the Indian community by instilling and perpetuating these Indian versus Indian tactics. Native Americans are the foremost group of people who continuously fight against premeditated cultural genocide.

I’ve grown up with misconceptions about Blacks, Chicanos, and Asians. I’m still in the process of trying to eliminate my racist pictures of other people of color. I know most of my images of other races come from television, books, movies, newspapers, and magazines. Who can pinpoint exactly where racism comes from? There are certain political dogmas that are excellent in their “analysis” of racism and how it feeds the capitalist system. To intellectually understand that it is wrong or politically incorrect to be racist leaves me cold. A lot of poor or working class white and brown people are just as racist as the “capitalist pig.” We are all continually pumped with gross and inaccurate images of everyone else and we all pump it out. I don’t think there are easy answers or formulas. My personal attempts at eliminating my racism have to start at the base level of those mindsets that inhibit my relationships with people.

Racism among third world people is an area that needs to be discussed and dealt with honestly. We form alliances loosely based on the fact that we have a common oppressor, yet we do not have a commitment to talk about our own fears and misconceptions about each other. I’ve noticed that liberal, consciousness-raised white people tend to be incredibly polite to third world people at parties or other social situations. It’s almost as if they make a point to SHAKE YOUR HAND or to introduce themselves and then run down all the latest right-on third world or Native American books they’ve just read. On the other hand it’s been my experience that if there are several third world gay people at a party, we make a point of avoiding each other, and spend our time talking to the whites to show how sophisticated and intelligent we are. I’ve always wanted to introduce myself to other third world people but wondered how I would introduce myself or what would I say. There are so many things I would want to say, except sometimes I don’t want to remember I’m
Third World or Native American. I don’t want to remember sometimes because it means recognizing that we’re outlaws.

At the Third World Gay Conference in October 1979, the Asian and Native American people in attendance felt the issues affecting us were not adequately included in the workshops. Our representation and leadership had minimal input, which resulted in a skimpy educational process about our struggles. The conference glaringly pointed out to us the narrow definition held by some people that third world means black people only. It was a depressing experience to sit in the lobby of Harambee House with other Native Americans and Asians, feeling removed from other third world groups with whom there is supposed to be this automatic solidarity and empathy. The Indian group sat in my motel room discussing and exchanging our experiences within the third world context. We didn’t spend much time in workshops conducted by other third world people because of feeling unwelcomed at the conference and demoralized by having an invisible presence. What’s worse than being invisible among your own kind?

It is of particular importance to us as third world gay people to begin a serious interchange of sharing and educating ourselves about each other. We not only must struggle with the racism and homophobia of straight white America, but must often struggle with the homophobia that exists within our third world communities. Being third world doesn’t always connote a political awareness or activism. I’ve met a number of third world and Native American lesbians who’ve said they’re just into “being themselves,” and that politics has no meaning in their lives. I agree that everyone is entitled to “be themselves” but in a society that denies respect and basic rights to people because of their ethnic background, I feel that individuals cannot idly sit by and allow themselves to be co-opted by the dominant society. I don’t know what moves a person to be politically active or to attempt to raise the quality of life in our world. I only know what motivates my political responsibility... the death of Anna Mae Aquash—Native American freedom fighter—“mysteriously” murdered by a bullet in the head; Raymond Yellow Thunder—forced to dance naked in front of a white VFW club in Nebraska—murdered; Rita Silk-Nauni—imprisoned for life for defending her child; my dear friend Mani Lucas-Papago—shot in the back of the head outside of a gay bar in Phoenix. The list could go on and on. My Native American History, recent and past, moves me to continue as a political activist.

And in the white gay community there is rampant racism which is never adequately addressed or acknowledged. My friend Chrystos from the Menominee Nation gave a poetry reading in May 1980, at a Bay Area feminist bookstore. Her reading consisted of poems and journal entries in which she wrote honestly from her heart about the many “isms” and contradictions in most of our lives. Chrystos’ bluntly revealing observations on her experiences with the white-lesbian-feminist community are similar to mine and are probably echoed by other lesbians of color.

Her honesty was courageous and should be representative of the kind of forum our community needs to openly discuss mutual racism. A few days following Chrystos’ reading, a friend who was in the same bookstore overheard a white lesbian denounce Chrystos’ reading as anti-lesbian and racist.

A few years ago, a white lesbian telephoned me requesting an interview, explaining that she was taking Native American courses at a local university, and that she needed data for her paper on gay Native Americans. I agreed to the interview with the idea that I would be helping a “sister” and would also be able to educate her about Native American struggles. After we completed the interview, she began a diatribe on how sexist Native Americans are, followed by a questioning session in which I was to enlighten her mind about
why Native Americans are so sexist. I attempted to rationally answer her
innately racist and insulting questions, although my inner response was to tell
her to remove herself from my house. Later it became very clear how I had
been manipulated as a sounding board for her ugly and distorted views
about Native Americans. Her arrogance and disrespect were characteristic
of the racist white people in South Dakota. If I tried to point it out, I’m sure she
would have vehemently denied her racism.

During the Briggs Initiative scare, I was invited to speak at a rally to repre-
sent Native American solidarity against the initiative. The person who
spoke prior to me expressed a pro-Bakke sentiment which the audience bood
and hissed. His comments left the predominantly white audience angry and
in disruption. A white lesbian stood up demanding that a third world person
address the racist comments he had made. The MC, rather than taking re-
ponsibility for restoring order at the rally, realized that I was the next speaker
and I was also T-H-I-R-D-W-O-R-L-D!! I refused to address the remarks of
the previous speaker because of the attitudes of the MC and the white lesbian
that only third world people are responsible for speaking out against racism. It is
inappropriate for progressive or liberal white people to expect warriors in brown ar-
more to eradicate racism. There must be co-responsibility from people of color
and white people to equally work on this issue. It is not just MY responsibil-
ity to point out and educate about racist activities and beliefs.

Redman, redskin, savage, heathen, injun, american indians, first americ-
cans, indigenous peoples, natives, amerindian, native american, nigger, ne-
gro, black, wet back, greaser, mexican, spanish, latin, hispanic, chucano,
chink, oriental, asian, disadvantaged, special interest group, minority, third
world, fourth world, people of color, illegal aliens—oh, yes, about them, will
the U.S. government recognize that the Founding Fathers (you know George
Washington and all those guys) are this country’s first illegal aliens.

We are named by others and we are named by ourselves.

Epilogue . . .

Following writing most of this, I went to visit my home in South Dakota.
It was my first visit in eight years. I kept putting off my visit year after year
because I could not tolerate the white people there and the ruralness and
poverty of the reservation. And because in the eight years since I left home, I
came out as a lesbian. My visit home was overwhelming. Floods and floods of
locked memories broke. I rediscovered myself there in the hills, on the
prairies, in the sky, on the road, in the quiet nights, among the stars, listining
to the distant yelps of coyotes, walking on Lakota earth, seeing Bear Butte,
looking at my grandparents’ cragged faces, standing under wakiyan, smelling
the Paha Sapa [Black Hills], and being with my precious circle of relatives.

My sense of time changed, my manner of speaking changed, and a cer-
tain freedom with myself returned.

I was sad to leave but recognized that a significant part of myself has
never left and never will. And that part is what gives me strength—the
strength of my people’s enduring history and continuing belief in the sover-
eignty of our lives.
Strangers among Us
How Latino Immigration Is Transforming America

Roberto Suro

On Imelda’s fifteenth birthday, her parents were celebrating everything they had accomplished by coming north to make a new life in the United States. Two short people in brand-new clothes, they stood in the driveway of their home in Houston and greeted relatives, friends, and neighbors, among them a few people who had come from the same village in central Mexico and who would surely carry gossip of the party back home. A disc jockey with a portable stereo presided over the backyard as if it were a cabaret instead of a patch of grass behind an overcrowded bungalow where five people shared two bedrooms. A folding table sagged with platters of tacos and fajitas. An aluminum keg of beer sat in a wheelbarrow atop a bed of half-melted ice cubes. For Imelda’s parents, the festivities that night served as a triumphant display of everything they had earned by working two jobs each. Like most of the other adults at the party, they had come north to labor in restaurants, factories, warehouses, or construction sites by day and to clean offices at night. They had come to work and to raise children in the United States.

Imelda, who had been smuggled across the Rio Grande as a toddler, wore a frilly dress ordered by catalog from Guadalajara, as befits a proper Mexican celebrating her quinceañera, which is the traditional coming-out party for fifteen-year-old Latin girls. Her two younger sisters and a little brother, all U.S. citizens by birth, wore new white shirts from a discount store. Their hair had been combed down with sharp, straight parts and dabs of pomade.

When it came time for Imelda to dance her first dance, her father took her in his arms for one of the old-fashioned polkas that had been his favorite when a band played in the town square back home. By tradition, boys could begin courting her after that dance. Imelda’s parents went to bed that night content they had raised their children according to proper Mexican custom.

The next morning at breakfast, Imelda announced that she was pregnant, that she was dropping out of school, and that she was moving in with her boyfriend, a Mexican-American who did not speak Spanish and who did not know his father. That night, she ate a meal purchased with food stamps and cooked on a hot plate by her boyfriend’s mother. She remembers the dinner well. “That night, man, I felt like an American. I was free.”

This is the promise and the peril of Latino immigration. Imelda’s parents had traveled to Texas on a wave of expectations that carried them from the diminishing life of peasant farmers on a dusty rancho to quiet contentment as low-wage workers in an American city. These two industrious immigrants had produced a teenage welfare mother, who in turn was to have an American baby. In the United States, Imelda had learned the language and the ways. In the end, what she learned best was how to be poor in an American inner city.

Latino immigration delivers short-term gains and has long-term costs. For decades now, the United States has engaged in a form of deficit spending that can be measured in human lives. Through their hard work at low wages, Latinos have produced immediate benefits for their families, employers, and consumers, but American society has never defined a permanent place for these immigrants or their children and it has repeatedly put off considering their future. That future, however, is now arriving, and it will produce a reckoning. The United States will need new immigration policies to decide who gets into the country. More importantly, the nation will need new means of assuring political equality and freedom of economic opportunity. Soon Americans will learn once again that in an era of immigration, the newcomers not only demand change; they create change. When I last met Imelda, she was just a few weeks short of her due date, but she didn’t have anything very nice to say about her baby or her boyfriend. Growing up in Houston as the child of Mexican immigrants had filled her with resent-
ment, especially toward her parents, and that was what she wanted to talk about.

"We’d get into a lot of yelling and stuff at home because my parents, they’d say, ‘You’re Mexican. Speak Spanish. Act like a Mexican girl,’ and I’d say, ‘I’m here now and I’m going to be like the other kids.’ They didn’t care."

Imelda is short and plump, with wide brown eyes and badly dyed yellow hair. She wore a denim shirt with the sleeves ripped off, and her expression was a studied pout. Getting pregnant was just one more way of expressing anger and disdain. She is a dime-store Madonna.

Imelda is also a child of the Latino migration. She is a product of that great movement of people from Latin America into the United States that is older than any borders but took on a startling new meaning when it gradually gained momentum after the 1960s and then turned into something huge in the 1980s. Latino immigrants were drawn north when America needed their services, and they built communities known as barrios in every major city. But then in the 1990s, as these newcomers began to define their permanent place here, the ground shifted on them. They and their children—many of them native-born Americans—found themselves struggling with an economy that offered few opportunities to people trying to get off the bottom. They also faced a populace sometimes disconcerted by the growing number of foreigners in its midst. Immigration is a transaction between the newcomers and the hosts. It will be decades before there is a final tally for this great wave of immigration, but the terms of the deal have now become apparent.

Imelda’s story does not represent the best or the worst of the Latino migration, but it does suggest some of the challenges posed by the influx. Those challenges are defined first of all by demography. No other democracy has ever experienced an uninterrupted wave of migration that has lasted as long and that has involved as many people as the recent movement of Spanish-speaking people to the United States. Twelve million foreign-born Latinos live here. If immigration and birth rates remain at current levels, the total Hispanic population will grow at least three times faster than the population as a whole for several decades, and Latinos will become the nation’s largest minority group, surpassing the size of the black population [in just] a few years. . . . after the turn of the [twenty-first] century. Despite some differences among them, Latinos constitute a distinctive linguistic and cultural group, and no single group has ever dominated a prolonged wave of immigration the way Latinos have for thirty years. By contrast, Asians, the other large category of immigrants, come from nations as diverse as India and Korea, and although the Latino migration is hardly monolithic, the Asian influx represents a much greater variety of cultures, languages, and economic experiences. Moreover, not since the Irish potato famine migration of the 1840s has any single nationality accounted for such a large share of an immigrant wave as the Mexicans have in recent decades. The 6.7 million Mexican immigrants living in the United States in 1996 made up 27 percent of the entire foreign-born population, and they outnumbered the entire Asian immigrant population by more than 2 million people. Latinos are hardly the only immigrants coming to the United States in the 1990s, but they will define this era of immigration, and this country’s response to them will shape its response to all immigrants.

Latinos, like most other immigrants, tend to cluster together. Their enclaves are the barrios, a Spanish word for neighborhoods that has become part of English usage because barrios have become such a common part of every American city. Most barrios, however, remain a place apart, where Latinos live separated from others by custom, language, and preference. They are surrounded by a city but are not part of it. Imelda lived in a barrio named Magnolia Park, after the trees that once grew along the banks of the bayou there. Like other barrios, Magnolia is populated primarily by poor and working-class Latinos, and many newly arrived immigrants start out there. Magnolia was first settled nearly a hundred years ago by Mexicans who fled revolution in their homeland and found jobs dredging the ship channel and port that allowed Houston to become a great city. Latinos continued to arrive off and on, especially when Houston was growing. Since the 1980s, when the great wave of new arrivals began pouring into Magnolia, it hasn’t mattered whether the oil city was in boom or bust—Latinos always find jobs, even when they lack skills and education. Most of Magnolia is poor, but it is also a neighborhood where people go to work before dawn and work into the night.

Like other barrios, Magnolia serves as an efficient port of entry for Latino immigrants because it is an easy place to find cheap housing, learn about jobs, and keep connected to home. Some newcomers and their children pass through Magnolia and find a way out to more prosperous neighborhoods where they can leave the barrio life behind. But for millions like Imelda who
came of age in the 1990s, the barrios have become a dead end of unfulfilled expectations.

"We could never get stuff like pizza at home," Imelda went on, "just Mexican foods. My mother would give me these silly dresses to wear to school. No jeans. No jewelry. No makeup. And they'd always say, 'Stick with the Mexican kids. Don't talk to the Anglos; they'll boss you. Don't run around with the Chicanos [Mexican-Americans]; they take drugs. And just don't go near the morenos [blacks] for any reason.'"

Imelda's parents live in a world circumscribed by the barrio. Except for the places where they work, the rest of the city, the rest of America, seems to them as remote as the downtown skyline visible off in the distance on clear days. After more than a dozen years, they speak all the English they need, which isn't much. What they know best is how to find and keep work.

Imelda learned English from the television that was her constant childhood companion. Outside, as Magnolia became a venue for gangs and drug sales, she learned to be streetwise and sassy. Growing up fast in Magnolia, Imelda learned how to want things but not how to get them.

Latinos are different from all other immigrants past and present because they come from close by and because many come illegally. No industrialized nation has ever faced such a vast migration across a land border with the virtual certainty that it will continue to challenge the government's ability to control that border for years to come. No immigrant group has carried the stigma of illegality that now attaches itself to many Latinos. Unlike most immigrants, Latinos arrive already deeply connected to the United States. Latinos come as relations, distant relations perhaps, but familiar and connected nonetheless. They seem to know us. We seem to know them, and almost as soon as they are in the house, they become part of our bedroom arguments. They are newcomers, and yet they find their culture imbedded in the landscape of cities that have always had Spanish names, such as Los Angeles and San Antonio, or that have become largely Spanish-speaking, such as Miami and New York. They do not consider themselves strangers here because they arrive to something familiar.

They come from many different nations, many different races, yet once here they are treated like a pack of blood brothers. In the United States, they live among folk who share their names but have forgotten their language, ethnic kinsmen who are Latinos by ancestry but U.S. citizens by generations of birthright. The newcomers and the natives may share little else, but for the most part they share neighborhoods, the Magnolias, where their fates become intertwined. Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans account for most of the native-born Latino population. They are the U.S.-made vessel into which the new immigration flows. They have been Americans long enough to have histories, and these are sad histories of exploitation and segregation abetted by public authorities. As a result, a unique designation was born. "Hispanics" became a minority group. This identity is an inescapable aspect of the Latino immigrant experience because newcomers are automatically counted as members of the group for purposes of public policy and because the discrimination that shaped that identity persists in some segments of the American public. However, it is an awkward fit for several reasons. The historical grievances that led to minority group designation for Latinos are significant, but compared to slavery or Jim Crow segregation they are neither as well known nor as horrible. As a result, many Americans simply do not accept the idea that Latinos have special standing, and not every native Latino embraces this history as an inescapable element of self-concept. Moreover, Latinos do not carry a single immutable marker, like skin color, that reinforces group identity. Minority group status can be an important element of a Latino's identity in the United States, but it is not such a clear and powerful element of American life that it automatically carries over to Latino immigrants.

"Hispanic" has always been a sweeping designation attached to people of diverse cultures and economic conditions, different races and nationalities, and the sweep has vastly increased by the arrival of immigrants who now make up about 40 percent of the group. The designation applies equally to a Mexican-American whose family has been in Texas since before the Alamo and a Mexican who just crossed the Rio Grande for the first time. Minority group status was meant to be as expansive as the discrimination it had to confront. But now for the first time, this concept is being stretched to embrace both a large native Latino population with a long undeniable history of discrimination and immigrants who are just starting out here. The same is occurring with some Asian groups, but the Latino phenomenon has a far greater impact because of the numbers involved. Latino immigrants are players in the old and unresolved dilemma of race in America,
and because they do not fit any of the available roles, they are a force of change.

Like all other newcomers, Latino immigrants arrive as blank slates on which their future course has yet to be written. They are moving toward that future in many directions at once, not en masse as a single cohesive group. Some remain very Latino; others become very American. Their skin comes in many different colors and shades. Some are black, and some of them can pass very readily as white. Most Latinos arrive poor, but they bring new energy to the labor force even as they multiply the ranks of the chronically poor. Latino immigrants challenge the whole structure of social science, politics, and jurisprudence that categorizes people in terms of lifetime membership in racial or ethnic groups. The barrios do not fit into an urban landscape segregated between rich and poor, between the dependent and the taxed.

Latino immigrants come in large numbers. They come from nearby. They join fellow Latinos who are a native minority group. Many arrive poor, illegally, and with little education. Those are the major ingredients of a challenge unlike any other.

More than a third of all Latinos are younger than eighteen years old. This vast generation is growing faster than any other segment of the population. It is also failing faster. While dropout rates among Anglos and African-Americans steadily decline, they continue to rise among Latino immigrants, and mounting evidence suggests that many who arrive in their teens simply never enter American schools at all. A 1996 Rand study of census data found that high school participation rates were similarly high—better than 90 percent—for whites, blacks, and Asians, native and immigrant alike, and for native Latinos, as well. Latino immigrants, especially from Mexico, were the only group lagging far behind, with less than 75 percent of the school-age teens getting any education. Only 62 percent of the Mexican immigrant seventeen-year-olds were in school, and these young people are the fuel of U.S. population growth into the twenty-first century.

Dropout rates are only one symptom. This massive generation of young people is adapting to an America characterized by the interaction of plagues. Their new identities are being shaped by the social epidemics of youth homicides, pregnancy, and drug use, the medical epidemic of AIDS, and a political epidemic of disinvestment in social services. These young Latinos need knowledge to survive in the workforce, but the only education available to them comes from public school systems that are on the brink of collapse. They are learning to become Americans in urban neighborhoods that most Americans see only in their nightmares. Imelda and a vast generation of Latino young people like her are the victims of a vicious bait and switch. The United States offered their parents opportunities. So many of the children get the plagues.

For the parents, movement to the United States almost always brings tangible success. They may be poor by U.S. standards, but they measure their accomplishments in terms of what they have left behind. By coming north, they overcome barriers of race and class that have been insuperable for centuries in Latin America. Meanwhile, the children are left on the wrong side of the barriers of race and class that are becoming ever more insuperable in the United States. With no memory of the rancho, they have no reason to be thankful for escaping it. They look at their parents and all they see is toil and poverty. They watch American TV, and all they see is affluence. Immigrant children learning to live in this dark new world face painful challenges but get little help. Now, on top of everything else, they are cursed by people who want to close the nation's doors against them. The effects are visible on their faces.

"I can tell by looking in their eyes how long they've been here," said the Reverend Virgil Elizondo, rector of San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas. "They come sparkling with hope, and the first generation finds that hope rewarded. Their children's eyes no longer sparkle. They have learned only to want jobs and money they can't have and thus to be frustrated."

The United States may not have much use now for Imelda's son, but he will be eighteen and ready to join the labor force in the second decade of the next century, just as the bulk of the baby-boom generation hits retirement age. Then, when the proportion of elderly to young workers is going out of whack, this country will have a great need for him and the other children born in the barrios, who will contribute financial sustenance in the form of their payroll deductions and other taxes. This is already an inescapable fact because of the relatively low birth rates among U.S.'s whites and African-Americans for the past several decades. Women of Mexican ancestry had fertility rates three times higher than non-Hispanic women in the 1990s (and they were the least educated mothers of any group). Mexican
immigrant women account for more than a quarter of all the births in California and nearly a third of the births to teenage mothers. The United States may not care about the children of the barrios, but it must start to address their problems now. If it lets them fail, there will be a great price to pay.

Not all immigrants are in such straits. Social scientists have taken to describing an “hourglass effect” in the distribution of income, education, and skills among recent immigrants because they are bunched at the extremes. At the top, an extraordinary two-thirds of all immigrants from India arrive with at least four years of college. Newcomers from Korea, the Philippines, China, and several other Asian nations also arrive with more education than the average native-born American. At the bottom of the hourglass are most of the Latino nationalities that have recently produced large inflows. Less than 8 percent of the immigrants from the Dominican Republic or El Salvador and less than 4 percent of the Mexicans have four years of college. Many Latino immigrants lack not only the credentials to prosper but also the minimum education necessary to survive in the U.S. economy. Less than a quarter of all Mexican immigrants have a high school degree.4

The immigrants at the top—mostly Asians—generate a few policy controversies that generally fall under the heading “embarrassment of riches,” such as when they contribute to a glut of medical specialists. A considerable number of Latino immigrants have achieved middle-class stability and are unlikely to cause much concern. However, the real social, political, and economic challenges arising from immigration today are posed by those at the bottom, and they are overwhelmingly Latinos. Again, demography defines the challenge because the top and the bottom of the hourglass are not the same size. At the top, 760,000 Indian immigrants contribute exceptional skills. At the bottom, 6.7 million Mexicans represent extraordinary needs.

About a third of all recent Latino immigrants live below the official poverty line. More than a million and a half Mexicans who entered the country legally and illegally since 1980—43 percent of the total—were officially designated as poor in 1994. With little education and few skills, they have nowhere to start but low on the economic ladder, and in America today, people who start low tend to stay low and their children stay low as well unless they get an education. For two decades now, immigration has quietly added to the size of that perennially poor population and it has changed the nature of poverty in the United States. Twenty years ago there were nearly three times more poor African-Americans in this country than poor Latinos, but those numbers have been converging during the economic expansion of the 1990s with the African-American poverty figures trending down and the Latino numbers rising so that they are now nearly equal. However, they represent strikingly different forms of poverty. In 1996 the workforce participation rate for Latinos was higher than for blacks, indeed it was even higher than for whites, but Latinos also had the highest poverty rate of any group. Latinos suffer the poverty of the working poor. While that is not unusual in the immigrant experience, it marks a historic departure from the kind of poverty that has plagued American cities for the past several decades. William Julius Wilson, the Harvard sociologist who invented the concept of the underclass, argues that “the disappearance of work and the consequences of that disappearance for both social and cultural life are the central problems in the inner-city ghetto.” That diagnosis from Wilson’s 1996 book, When Work Disappears, applies to urban African-American communities, but not to the barrios. As Wilson himself notes, nearly a decade of detailed research in Chicago showed that poor Mexican immigrants can share the same kind of dilapidated neighborhoods as poor blacks, but the Mexicans will be surrounded by small businesses owned by fellow immigrants and will benefit from tightly knit social networks that help them find jobs.6

Latino poverty will not be remedied by the welfare-to-work programs that are now virtually the sole focus of U.S. social policy, and it will not be fixed by trying to close the nation to further immigration. The Latino poor are here and they are not going to go away. Unless new avenues of upward mobility open up for Latino immigrants and their children, the size of America’s underclass will quickly double and in the course of a generation it will double again. That second generation will be different than the first. It will not only suffer the economic and political disenfranchisement that plagues poor blacks today but it will also be cut off from the American mainstream in even more profound and dangerous ways. . . .

Latino immigrants present more of a mixed picture than their native coethnics. Historically, immigrants start out earning less than native-born workers of a similar age and similar skills
because the newcomer usually is facing a language barrier and lacks familiarity with the labor market, but over time that wage gap shrinks. The conventional benchmark is that immigrants who arrive when they are twenty-five or younger will close the gap and earn wages equivalent to those of a native worker after twenty years in the labor force. It is a long pull, but for many millions of people it has proved fruitful. Considerable evidence now shows that Latino immigrants, especially Mexicans, are not closing the gap. In the most extensive nationwide study of immigration's economic, fiscal, and demographic impacts on the United States, the National Research Council concluded in 1997 that Mexicans start out with the lowest wage levels of any immigrant nationality and that their wage gap actually widens substantially over time.7 Meanwhile, European and Asian immigrants are closing the wage gap at something like the traditional pace. A 1997 UCLA study found that Mexicans who had been in the United States for thirty years had achieved modest economic gains, while recent arrivals suffered actual declines in their earnings.8 Nearly three-quarters of the recent arrivals went to work in “low-skill occupations out of which there are few avenues of escape,” writes the study’s author, Vilma Ortiz, a UCLA sociologist. “Clearly, the traditional ethnic saga of hard labor followed by rewards does not apply to Latino immigrants.”

The latest wave of immigrants has come to the United States only to find the ladder broken. Their arrival has coincided with changes in the structure of the U.S. economy that make the old three-generation formula obsolete. The middle rungs of the ladder, which allowed for a gradual transition into American life, are more precarious because so many jobs disappeared along with the industrial economy of smokestacks and assembly lines. In addition, the wages paid at the bottom of the labor force have declined in value steadily since the early 1980s.

The old blue-collar jobs are not the only rungs of the ladder that are now wobbly. The United States greatly expanded its system of public education in order to prepare the children and the grandchildren of the European immigrants for the workforce, extending it first to high schools and then to universities. Latino immigrants have arrived, only to find this education system dangerously in disrepair. As with the demise of the industrial economy, this reflects a fundamental change in the structure of American society. Government’s priorities have shifted in ways that alter the nature of opportunity. The results have quickly become apparent. The State of California now pays better salaries to experienced prison guards than to tenured Cal State professors. The guards are more in demand. Labor unions, big-city political machines, and other institutions that helped the European immigrants are also less vigorous and far less interested in the immigrants’ cause than in the early decades of this century. The Roman Catholic church gave vital help to the Europeans in establishing enclaves, gaining education, and developing ethnic solidarity, but it moved to the suburbs with the second and third generations and has played a minor institutional role—primarily as a lobbyist for liberal immigration policies—in helping the new Latinos gain a foothold in the United States.

Starting at the bottom has usually been an immigrant’s fate, but this takes on a new meaning in an increasingly immobile and stratified society. Skills and education have come to mark a great divide in the U.S. workforce, and the gap is growing ever broader. The entire population is being divided into a two-tier workforce, with a college education as the price of admission to the upper tier. In the new knowledge-based economy, people with knowledge prosper. People without it remain poor. These divisions have the makings of a new class system because this kind of economic status is virtually hereditary. Very few Latino immigrants arrive with enough education to make it into the upper tier of the workforce. Their children, like the children of all poor people, face the greatest economic pressures to drop out and find work. When they do stay in school, the education they receive is, for the most part, poor.

Like Latinos today, the European ethnics built enclaves, and some were places of exceptional misery and rejection. But the Europeans’ enclaves became places to make a gradual transition into American life. As they built their communities, they could nurture ethnic identity and cohesion until it evolved into a source of political strength. The Europeans established their economic claims over long periods of time, slowly moving into the mainstream as they did so.

Blacks also built enclaves when they moved north, although their separation was forced on them. A blue-collar class developed and in another generation a middle class and a professional class of blacks emerged. This upward mobility resulted from employment in the industrial economy, antipoverty programs, and a con-
certed effort to grant African-Americans at least minimal access to good schools and universities. Even with these vehicles of upward mobility, it took a long time to achieve limited success.

Today, Latinos do not have the luxury of time. Immigrants and their children are no longer allowed missteps or setbacks. And there are fewer programs to ensure that at least a few of the worthy move up. Newcomers today either make it or they don't. Instead of a gradual evolution, the process of finding a place in America has become a sudden-death game.

The United States sits atop the Western Hemisphere like a beacon atop a lighthouse, a sole source, powerfully distorting everything it illuminates even as it points the way. For a hundred years, it has exercised a powerful influence over Latin America, and whether the medium was the Marine Corps or the Peace Corps, the message has always been that Americans knew better, did better, lived better. Whenever the United States became scared of Nazis or Communists, it expended huge resources to portray itself as the paragon of civic virtue and a land of boundless economic opportunity. Meanwhile, the American consumer culture penetrated deep into the Latin psyche, informing every appetite and defining new desires. With TV shows, soldiers, and political ideals, the United States has reached out and touched people across an entire hemisphere. It has gotten back immigrants in return.

America beckons, but massive human flows occur only after migrant channels have evolved into highly efficient conduits for human aspirations. In Mexico's case, emigration to the United States developed out of proximity, shared history, and encouraging U.S. business practices and government policies. When the Mexican revolution displaced millions of peasants after 1910, railroad foremen greeted them at the border and recruited them into track gangs. Dispersed by the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe railroads, they remained in hundreds of farm towns and built the first urban barrios. Aside from these permanent settlements, a kind of circular traffic developed. Many thousands of Mexicans came to the United States for sojourns of work often lasting no more than a harvesting season but sometimes stretching to years. This migration was expanded and legalized by an agricultural guest-worker program launched in 1942 to help with wartime labor shortages. American farmers liked the cheap, disposable labor so much that that program survived until 1964. By that time, 4.5 million braceros, as the workers were known, had learned the way north. The bracero program ended, but the traffic continued even as the United States started trying to control the flow. Many Mexicans had acquired some kind of legal status here, including those born in the United States to migrant-worker parents. Others came illegally and found shelter in such barrios as Magnolia and East L.A., which had become permanent Spanish-speaking enclaves. Major changes in U.S. immigration law enacted in 1965 raised the overall ceilings for legal immigration and removed biases that favored Northern and Western Europeans. The most important change in the long run, however, gave preference to immigrants who were reuniting with kin. Having a relative here became the key qualification for a visa, rather than a prospective employer or marketable skills, and immigrant flows became self-duplicating as every new legal immigrant eventually became a potential sponsor for others.

Once efficient linkages had developed, a variety of economic circumstances in the United States generated the demand for immigrant labor, which encouraged the continuation of migrant flows. Just as the rise of the industrial era created jobs for the great wave of European immigrants, the end of that era created opportunities for Latinos. Some manufacturers in old industries such as garments, furniture, and auto parts turned to low-cost immigrant labor as a way of remaining competitive with foreign producers. As the U.S. population shifted south to the Sun Belt, Latinos arrived to build the new cities. Immigrants filled hundreds of new job niches as the United States developed a postindustrial service economy that saw booms in light manufacturing and all manner of consumer and financial services.

In addition to economic demand, changes in U.S. immigration law have also promoted continued movement from Latin America. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 was meant to halt illegal immigration, but it actually encouraged its growth. It created amnesties that allowed nearly 3 million former illegal aliens—nearly 90 percent of them Latinos—to acquire legal residence and eventually become eligible for citizenship. They, in turn, have become hosts to about a million relatives, who have lived in the United States illegally while applying for legal status, and to uncounted others who have no claim on residency. The 1986 reform also imposed sanctions for the first time—mostly civil
fines—on employers who hire illegal aliens. No mechanism was ever created to enforce the law, and so it eventually became a meaningless prohibition. Then in 1990, Congress raised the limits on several forms of legal immigration, thus ensuring a protracted influx.

... The Irish came across the Atlantic as early as the seventeenth century and kept coming steadily for nearly two hundred years in response to demand for low-wage workers. This well-established linkage allowed for a massive, explosive migration during the potato famine in the middle of the nineteenth century and another huge wave in the 1880s during a period of rapid industrialization. Although the U.S. government now tries to regulate immigration, Mexico resembles the Irish case. As with the Irish in the nineteenth century, the migrant channels are abundant and efficient—there are large receiving communities here and the native-born descendants of immigrants have begun to penetrate the mainstream of American society. When Mexico suffered a devastating economic crisis in the 1980s and the U.S. economy boomed, the number of Mexican immigrants living in the United States doubled in a decade. That explosion continues so forcefully that the numbers might nearly double again in the 1990s. And the explosion does not involve just Mexicans now. The flows from the Dominican Republic and El Salvador are also running at a rate headed for a doubling by the end of the decade.

Americans are only just waking up to the size of this immigrant wave, and yet the foreign-born already account for 9 percent of the total population—the highest proportion since World War II. For fifty years after the end of the European wave in the 1920s, there was no steady immigration, and then the long lull was followed by a demographic storm. Some 7 million more immigrants, counting the estimates of the illegal flow, came to the United States between 1975 and 1995 than during the preceding half-century hiatus. Now, like Rip van Winkle aroused from his slumber, the United States is trying to understand something that is at once familiar but changed. The nation's reference points for large-scale immigration are set in an era of steamships and telegraphs, yet the United States needs to manage a massive influx at a time of jet travel and global television. Moreover, the Latino immigration is not just unexpected and unfamiliar; many Americans consider it unwanted. No national policy debate and no clear process of decision making led to formal action opening the doors to a level of immigration unfamiliar in living memory.

When the counterreaction hit, it hit hard. In the early 1990s an extraordinary variety of events combined to present immigration as a menacing force. It began quietly during the recession at the start of the decade and grabbed the public's attention with the nanny problems of Zoë Baird, President Clinton's first nominee for attorney general. Then came the World Trade Center bombing, perpetrated by evil doers who slipped through the immigration system. Chinese smuggling ships, Haitian boat people, Cuban rafters, and swarms of Tijuana border jumpers all fueled anxieties about a chaotic world infringing on America. Even though the United States remained more open to foreigners than any other nation, immigrants had come to represent mysterious and uncontrollable dangers...

**NOTES**


   No single group has ever dominated a prolonged wave of immigration: In the 1890s, for example, Italy, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany had almost equal shares of the influx (around 15 percent each), with Scandinavia, Ireland, and Great Britain not far behind (around 10 percent each).


3. More than a third of all Latinos are younger than eighteen years old: George P. Venzor, Allan Abrahamse, How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education (Rand, 1996).


Southeast Asian Americans

Richard T. Schaefer

The people of Southeast Asia—Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Lao—were part of the former French Indochinese Union. *Southeast Asian* is an umbrella term used for convenience; the peoples of these areas are ethnically and linguistically diverse. Ethnic Lao constitute only half of the Lao people, for example; a significant number of Khmer, Yao, and Hmong form minorities. Numbering more than 2 million in 2000, Vietnamese Americans are the largest group with 1,222,528, for 11.2 percent of the total Asian American population (Barnes and Bennett 2002).

THE REFUGEES

The problem of U.S. involvement in Indochina did not end when all U.S. personnel were withdrawn from South Vietnam in 1975. The final tragedy was the reluctant welcome given to the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos by Americans and people of other nations. One week after the evacuation of Vietnam in April 1975, a Gallup poll reported that 54 percent of Americans were in favor of giving sanctuary to the Asian refugees, with 36 percent in favor and 11 percent undecided. The primary objection to Vietnamese immigration was that it would further increase unemployment (Schaefer and Schaefer 1975).

Many Americans offered to house refugees in their homes, but others declared that the United States had too many Asians already and was in danger of losing its "national character." This attitude toward the Indochinese has been characteristic of the feeling that Harvard sociologist David Riesman called the gook syndrome. *Gook* is a derogatory term for an Asian, and the syndrome refers to the tendency to stereotype these people in the worst possible light. Riesman believed that the American news media created an unflattering image of the South Vietnamese and their government, leading the American people to believe they were not worth saving (Luce 1975).

The initial 135,000 Vietnamese refugees who fled in 1975 were joined by more than a million running from the later fighting and religious persecution that plagued Indochina. The United States accepted about half of the refugees, some of them the so-called boat people, primarily Vietnamese of ethnic Chinese background, who took to the ocean in overcrowded vessels, hoping that some ship would pick them up and offer sanctuary. Hundreds of thousands were placed in other nations or remain in overcrowded refugee camps administered by the United Nations.

THE PRESENT PICTURE

Like other immigrants, the refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia face a difficult adjustment. Few expect to return to their homeland for visits, and fewer expect to return there permanently. Therefore, many look to the United States as their permanent home and the home of their children. However, the adult immigrants still accept jobs well below their occupational positions in Southeast Asia; geographic mobility has been accompanied by downward social mobility. For example, only a small fraction of refugees employed as managers in Vietnam have been employed in similar positions in the United States.
Language is also a factor in adjustment by the refugees; a person trained as a manager cannot hold that position in the United States until he or she is fairly fluent in English. The available data indicate that refugees from Vietnam have increased their earnings rapidly, often by working long hours. Partly because Southeast Asians comprise significantly different subgroups, assimilation and acceptance are not likely to occur at the same rate for all.

Although most refugee children spoke no English upon their arrival here, they have done extremely well in school. Studies indicate that immigrant parents place great emphasis on education and are pleased by the prospect of their children going to college—something very rare in their homelands. The children do very well with this encouragement, which is not unlike that offered by Mexican immigrants to their children, as we discussed in Chapter 10. It remains to be seen whether this motivation will decline as the next young generation looks more to their American peers as role models.

The picture for young Southeast Asians in the United States is not completely pleasant. Crime is present in almost all ethnic groups, but some fear that in this case it has two very ugly aspects. Some of this crime may represent reprisals for the war: anti-Communists and communist sympathizers who continue their conflicts here. At the same time, gangs are emerging as young people seek the support of close-knit groups even if they engage in illegal and violent activities. Of course, this pattern is very similar to that followed by all groups in the United States. Indeed, defiance of authority can be regarded as a sign of assimilation. Another unpleasant but well-documented aspect of the present picture is the series of violent episodes directed at Southeast Asians by Whites and others expressing resentment over their employment or even their mere presence (Alvord 2000; Zhou and Bankston 1998).

In contrast to its inaction concerning earlier immigrant groups, the federal government involved itself conspicuously in locating homes for the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Pressured by many communities afraid of being overwhelmed by immigrants, government agencies attempted to disperse the refugees throughout the nation. Such efforts failed, mostly because the refugees, like European immigrants before them, sought out their compatriots. As a result, Southeast Asian communities and neighborhoods have become visible, especially in California and Texas. In such areas, where immigrants from Asia have reestablished some cultural practices from their homeland, a more pluralistic solution to their adjustment seems a possible alternative to complete assimilation. Also, Southeast Asians living outside metropolitan areas may make frequent trips to major urban areas, where they can stock up on food, books, and even videotapes in their native language (Aguillar-San Juan 1998; Mui 2001).

In 1995, the United States initiated normal diplomatic relations with Vietnam, which is leading to more movement between the nations. Gradually, Vietnamese Americans are returning to visit but generally not to take up permanent residence. Viet Kieu, Vietnamese living abroad, are making the return—some 270,000 in 1996 compared with only 80,000 4 years earlier. Generational issues are also merging as time passes. Westminster, California's Little Saigon community was split in 1999 when a merchant displayed the flag of (Communist) Vietnam and a picture of Ho Chi Minh, leader of the war against the United States and South Vietnam. Although data are unavailable on how many are coming from the United States, it is the country with the largest Viet Kieu community. Such movement back and forth will help to keep Vietnamese culture alive in the United States (Ebnet 2000; Lamb 1997).

CASE STUDY: A HMONG COMMUNITY

Wausau (population 38,000) is a community in rural Wisconsin, best known, perhaps, for the insurance company bearing its name. To sociologists, it is distinctive for its sizable Hmong (pronounced "Mong") population. Wausau finds itself with the greatest
percentage of Hmong of any city in Wisconsin. Hmong and a few other Southeast Asians account for 10 percent of the city’s population and 24 percent of its school students (Bureau of the Census 2001a; Wausau School District 2001).

The Hmong, who now number 170,000, immigrated to the United States from Laos and Vietnam after the April 1975 end of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Like other refugees at the time, the first Hmong came to Wausau invited by religious groups. Others followed as they found the surrounding agricultural lands as places they could find work. Coming from a very rural, peasant society, the immigrants faced dramatic adjustment upon arrival in the United States (Hein 2000).

Wausau school officials believed that progress in teaching the Hmong English was stymied because the newcomers continued to associate with each other and spoke only their native tongue. In the fall of 1993, the Wausau school board decided to distribute the Hmong and other poor students more evenly by restructuring its elementary schools in a scheme that required two-way busing.

Recalls of elected officials are rare in the United States, but in December 1993 opponents of the busing plan organized a special election that led to the removal of the five board members. This left the Wausau board with a majority who opposed the busing plan that had integrated Asian American youngsters into mostly White elementary schools. By 2002, "neighborhood schools" ruled in Wausau so that one elementary school had no Hmong children, several were more than 40 percent Hmong, and one was 55 percent Hmong (Seibert 2002; Wausau School District 2001).

How events will unfold in Wausau are unclear. However, positive signs are identifiable in Wausau and other centers of Hmong life in the United States. Immigrants and their children are moving into nonagriculture occupations. Enrollment in citizenship classes is growing. The Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association, funded by a federal grant and the local United Way, offers housing assistance. Although many struggle to make a go of it economically, large numbers are able to move off public assistance. Language barriers and lack of formal schooling still are barriers encountered by older Hmong residents, but the younger generation is emerging to face some of the same identity and assimilation questions experienced by other Asian American groups (Peckham 2002).
How Jews Became White

Karen Brodkin Sacks

The American nation was founded and developed by the Nordic race, but if a few more million members of the Alpine, Mediterranean and Semitic races are poured among us, the result must inevitably be a hybrid race of people as worthless and futile as the good-for-nothing mongrels of Central America and Southeastern Europe.

—Kenneth Roberts, qtd. in Carlson and Colburn 1972:312

It is clear that Kenneth Roberts did not think of my ancestors as white like him. The late nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries saw a steady stream of warnings by scientists, policymakers, and the popular press that “mongrelization” of the Nordic or Anglo-Saxon race—the real Americans—by inferior European races (as well as inferior non-European ones) was destroying the fabric of the nation. I continue to be surprised to read that America did not always regard its immigrant European workers as white, that they thought people from different nations were biologically different. My parents, who are first-generation U.S.-born Eastern European Jews, are not surprised. They expect anti-Semitism to be a part of the fabric of daily life, much as I expect racism to be a part of it. They came of age in a Jewish world in the 1920s and 1930s at the peak of anti-Semitism in the United States (Gerber 1986). They are proud of their upward mobility and think of themselves as pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. I grew up during the 1950s in the Euroethnic New York suburb of Valley Stream where Jews were simply one kind of white folks and where ethnicity meant little more to my generation than food and family heritage. Part of my familiarized ethnic heritage was the belief that Jews were smart and that our success was the result of our own efforts and abilities, reinforced by a culture that valued sticking together, hard work, education, and deferred gratification. Today, this belief in a Jewish version of Horatio Alger has become an entry point for racism by some mainstream Jewish organizations against African Americans especially, and for their opposition to affirmative action for people of color (Gordon 1964; Sowell 1981; Steinberg 1989: chap. 3).

It is certainly true that the United States has a history of anti-Semitism and of beliefs that Jews were members of an inferior race. But Jews were hardly alone. American anti-Semitism was part of a broader pattern of late-nineteenth-century racism against all southern and eastern European immigrants, as well as against Asian immigrants. These views justified all sorts of discriminatory treatment including closing the doors to immigration from Europe and Asia in the 1920s. This picture changed radically after World War II. Suddenly the same folks who promoted nativism and xenophobia were eager to believe that the Euro-origin people whom they had deported, reviled as members of inferior races, and prevented from immigrating only a few years earlier were now model middle-class white suburban citizens.
It was not an educational epiphany that made those in power change their hearts, their minds, and our race. Instead, it was the biggest and best affirmative action program in the history of our nation, and it was for Euro-males. There are similarities and differences in the ways each of the European immigrant groups became “whitened.” I want to tell the story in a way that links anti-Semitism to other varieties of anti-European racism, because this foregrounds what Jews shared with other Euro-immigrants and shows changing notions of whiteness to be part of America’s larger system of institutional racism.

EURORACES

The U.S. “discovery” that Europe had inferior and superior races came in response to the great waves of immigration from southern and eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. Before that time, European immigrants—including Jews—had been largely assimilated into the white population. The twenty-three million European immigrants who came to work in U.S. cities after 1880 were too many and too concentrated to disperse and blend. Instead, they piled up in the country’s most dilapidated urban areas, where they built new kinds of working-class ethnic communities. Since immigrants and their children made up more than 70 percent of the population of most of the country’s largest cities, urban America came to take on a distinctly immigrant flavor. The golden age of industrialization in the United States was also the golden age of class struggle between the captains of the new industrial empires and the masses of manual workers whose labor made them rich. As the majority of mining and manufacturing workers, immigrants were visibly major players in these struggles (Higham 1955:226; Steinberg 1969:36).

The Red Scare of 1919 clearly linked anti-immigrant to anti-working-class sentiment—to the extent that the Seattle general strike of native-born workers was blamed on foreign agitators. The Red Scare was fueled by economic depression, a massive post-war strike wave, the Russian revolution, and a new wave of postwar immigration.

Not surprisingly, the belief in European races took root most deeply among the wealthy U.S.-born Protestant elite, who feared a hostile and seemingly unassimilable working class. By the end of the nineteenth century, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge pressed Congress to cut off immigration to the United States; Teddy Roosevelt raised the alarm of “race suicide” and took Anglo-Saxon women to task for allowing “native” stock to be outbred by inferior immigrants. In the twentieth century, these fears gained a great deal of social legitimacy thanks to the efforts of an influential network of aristocrats and scientists who developed theories of eugenics—breeding for a “better” humanity—and scientific racism. Key to these efforts was Madison Grant’s influential Passing of the Great Race in which he shared his discovery that there were three or four major European races ranging from the superior Nordics of northwestern Europe to the inferior southern and eastern races of Alpines, Mediterraneans, and, worst of all, Jews, who seem to be everywhere in his native New York City. Grant’s nightmare was race mixing among Europeans. For him, “the cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew” (qtd. in Higham 1955:156). He didn’t have good things to say about Alpine or Mediterranea “races” either. For Grant, race and class were interwoven: the upper class was racially pure Nordic, and the lower classes came from the lower races.

Far from being on the fringe, Grant’s views resonated with those of the nonimmigrant middle class. A New York Times reporter wrote of his visit to the Lower East Side:
This neighborhood, peopled almost entirely by the people who claim to have been driven from Poland and Russia, is the eyesore of New York and perhaps the filthiest place on the western continent. It is impossible for a Christian to live there because he will be driven out, either by blows or the dirt and stench. Cleanliness is an unknown quantity to these people. They cannot be lifted up to a higher plane because they do not want to be. If the cholera should ever get among these people, they would scatter its germs as a sower does grain (qtd. in Schoener 1967:58).³

Such views were well within the mainstream of the early-twentieth-century scientific community. Grant and eugenicist Charles B. Davenport organized the Galton Society in 1918 in order to foster research and to otherwise promote eugenics and immigration restriction.⁴ . . .

By the 1920s, scientific racism sanctified the notion that real Americans were white and real whites came from northwest Europe. Racism animated laws excluding and expelling Chinese in 1882, and then closing the door to immigration by virtually all Asians and most Europeans in 1924 (Saxton 1971, 1990). Northwestern European ancestry as a requisite for whiteness was set in legal concrete when the Supreme Court denied Bhagat Singh Taind the right to become a naturalized citizen under a 1790 federal law that allowed whites the right to become naturalized citizens. Third argued that East Indians were the real Aryans and Caucasians, and therefore white. The Court countered that the United States only wanted blond Aryans and Caucasians, "that the blond Scandinavian and the brown Hindu have a common ancestor in the dim reaches of antiquity, but the average man knows perfectly well that there are unmistakable and profound differences between them today" (Takaki 1989:298–299). A narrowly defined white, Christian race was also built into the 1705 Virginia "Act concerning servants and slaves." This statute stated "that no Negroes, mulattos and Indians or other infidels or jews, Moors, Mahometans or other infidels shall, at any time, purchase any Christian servant, nor any other except of their own complexion" (Martyn 1979:111).⁵

The 1930 census added its voice, distinguishing not only immigrant from "native" whites, but also native whites of native white parentage, and native whites of immigrant (or mixed) parentage. In distinguishing immigrant (southern and eastern Europeans) from "native" (northwestern Europeans), the census reflected the racial distinctions of the eugenicist-inspired intelligence tests.⁶

Racism and anti-immigrant sentiment in general and anti-Semitism in particular flourished in higher education. Jews were the first of the Euroimigrant groups to enter colleges in significant numbers, so it wasn’t surprising that they faced the brunt of discrimination there.⁷ The Protestant elite complained that Jews were unwashed, uncouth, unrefined, loud, and pushy. Harvard University President A. Lawrence Lowell, who was also a vice president of the Immigration Restriction League, was openly opposed to Jews at Harvard. The Seven Sisters schools had a reputation for "flagrant discrimination." . . .

My parents’ conclusion is that Jewish success, like their own, was the result of hard work and of placing a high value on education. They went to Brooklyn College during the Depression. My mother worked days and started school at night, and my father went during the day. Both their families encouraged them. More accurately, their families expected this effort from them. Everyone they knew was in the same boat, and their world was made up of Jews who advanced as they did. The picture of New York—where most Jews lived—seems to back them up. In 1920, Jews made up 80 percent
of the students at New York’s City College, 90 percent of Hunter College, and before World War I, 40 percent of private Columbia University. By 1934, Jews made up almost 24 percent of all law students nationally, and 56 percent of those in New York City. Still, more Jews became public school teachers, like my parents and their friends, than doctors or lawyers (Steinberg 1989:137, 227). Steinberg has debunked the myth that Jews advanced because of the cultural value placed on education. This is not to say that Jews did not advance. They did. “Jewish success in America was a matter of historical timing... There was a fortuitous match between the experience and skills of Jewish immigrants, on the one hand, and the manpower needs and opportunity structures, on the other” (1989:103). Jews were the only ones among the southern and eastern European immigrants who came from urban, commercial, craft, and manufacturing backgrounds, not least of which was garment manufacturing. They entered the United States in New York, center of the nation’s booming garment industry, soon came to dominate its skilled (male) and “unskilled” (female) jobs, and found it an industry amenable to low-capital entrepreneurship. As a result, Jews were the first of the new European immigrants to create a middle class of small businesspersons early in the twentieth century. Jewish educational advances followed this business success and depended upon it, rather than creating it (see also Bodnar 1985 for a similar argument about mobility).

In the early twentieth century, Jewish college students entered a contested terrain in which the elite social mission was under challenge by a newer professional training mission. Pressure for change had begun to transform the curriculum and reorient college from a gentleman’s bastion to a training ground for the middle-class professionals needed by an industrial economy. “The curriculum was overhauled to prepare students for careers in business, engineering, scientific farming, and the arts, and a variety of new professions such as accounting and pharmacy that were making their appearance in American colleges for the first time” (Steinberg 1989:229). Occupational training was precisely what drew Jews to college. In a setting where disparagement of intellectual pursuits and the gentleman’s C were badges of distinction, it was not hard for Jews to excel.

How we interpret Jewish social mobility in this milieu depends on whom we compare Jews to. Compared with other immigrants, Jews were upwardly mobile. But compared with that of nonimmigrant whites, their mobility was very limited and circumscribed. Anti-immigrant racist and anti-Semitic barriers kept the Jewish middle class confined to a small number of occupations. Jews were excluded from mainstream corporate management and corporately employed professions, except in the garment and movie industries, which they built. Jews were almost totally excluded from university faculties (and the few that made it had powerful patrons). Jews were concentrated in small businesses, and in professions where they served a largely Jewish clientele (Davis 1990:146 n. 25; Silberman 1985:88–117; Sklare 1971:63–67)....

My parents’ generation believed that Jews overcame anti-Semitic barriers because Jews are special. My belief is that the Jews who were upwardly mobile were special among Jews (and were also well placed to write the story). My generation might well counter our parents’ story of pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps with, “But think what you might have been without the racism and with some affirmative action!” And that is precisely what the postwar boom, the decline of systematic, public anti-immigrant racism and anti-Semitism, and governmental affirmative action extended to white males.
EUROETHNICS INTO WHITES

By the time I was an adolescent, Jews were just as white as the next white person. Until I was eight, I was a Jew in a world of Jews. Everyone on Avenue Z in Sheepshead Bay was Jewish. I spent my days playing and going to school on three blocks of Avenue Z, and visiting my grandparents in the nearby Jewish neighborhoods of Brighton Beach and Coney Island. There were plenty of Italians in my neighborhood, but they lived around the corner. They were a kind of Jew, but on the margins of my social horizons. Portuguese were even more distant, at the end of the bus ride, at Sheepshead Bay. . . . We left that world in 1949 when we moved to Valley Stream, Long Island, which was Protestant, Republican, and even had farms until Irish, Italian, and Jewish ex-urbanites like us gave it a more suburban and Democratic flavor. Neither religion nor ethnicity separated us at school or in the neighborhood. Except temporarily. In elementary school years, I remember a fair number of dirt-bomb (a good suburban weapon) wars on the block. Periodically one of the Catholic boys would accuse me or my brother of killing his God, to which we would reply, “Did not” and start lobbing dirt-bombs. Sometimes he would get his friends from Catholic school, and I would get mine from public school kids on the block, some of whom were Catholic. Hostilities lasted no more than a couple of hours and punctuated an otherwise friendly relationship. They ended by junior high years, when other things became more important. Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, Italians, Irish, Poles, and “English” (I don’t remember hearing WASP as a kid) were mixed up on the block and in school. We thought of ourselves as middle class and very enlightened because our ethnic backgrounds seemed so irrelevant to high school culture. We didn’t see race (we thought), and racism was not part of our peer consciousness, nor were the immigrant or working-class histories of our families.

Like most chicken and egg problems, it’s hard to know which came first. Did Jews and other Euroethnics become white because they became middle class? That is, did money whiten? Or did being incorporated in an expanded version of whiteness open up the economic doors to a middle-class status? Clearly, both tendencies were at work. Some of the changes set in motion during the war against fascism led to a more inclusive version of whiteness. Anti-Semitism and anti-European racism lost respectability. The 1940 census no longer distinguished native whites of native parentage from those, like my parents, of immigrant parentage, so that Euroimmigrants and their children were more securely white by submersion in an expanded notion of whiteness. (This census also changed the race of Mexicans to white [U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940:4].) Theories of nurture and culture replaced theories of nature and biology. Instead of dirty and dangerous races who would destroy U.S. democracy, immigrants became ethnic groups whose children had successfully assimilated into the mainstream and risen to the middle class. In this new myth, Euroethnic suburbs like mine became the measure of U.S. democracy’s victory over racism. Jewish mobility became a new Horatio Alger story. In time and with hard work, every ethnic group would get a piece of the pie, and the United States would be a nation with equal opportunity for all its people to become part of a prosperous middle-class majority. And it seemed that Euroethnic immigrants and their children were delighted to join middle America. 8

This is not to say that anti-Semitism disappeared after World War II, only that it fell from fashion and was driven underground. . . .

Although changing views on who was white made it easier for Euroethnics to become middle class, it was also the case that economic prosperity played a very powerful role in the whitening process. Economic mobility of
Jews and other Euroethnics rested ultimately on U.S. postwar economic prosperity with its enormously expanded need for professional, technical, and managerial labor, and on government assistance in providing it. The United States emerged from the war with the strongest economy in the world... The postwar period was a historic moment for real class mobility and for the affluence we have erroneously come to believe was the U.S. norm. It was a time when the old white and the newly white masses became middle class.

The GI Bill of Rights, as the 1944 Serviceman’s Readjustment Act was known, was arguably the most massive affirmative action program in U.S. history. It was created to develop needed labor-force skills, and to provide those who had them with a life-style that reflected their value to the economy. The GI benefits ultimately extended to sixteen million GIs (veterans of the Korean War as well) included priority in jobs—that is, preferential hiring, but no one objected to it then; financial support during the job search; small loans for starting up businesses; and, most important, low-interest home loans and educational benefits, which included tuition and living expenses (Brown 1946; Hurd 1946; Mosch 1975; Postwar Jobs for Veterans 1945; Willenz 1983). This legislation was rightly regarded as one of the most revolutionary postwar programs. I call it affirmative action because it was aimed at and disproportionately helped male, Euro-origin GIs...

EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION

It is important to remember that prior to the war, a college degree was still very much a “mark of the upper class” (Willenz 1983:165). Colleges were largely finishing schools for Protestant elites. Before the postwar boom, schools could not begin to accommodate the American masses. Even in New York City before the 1930s, neither the public schools nor City College had room for more than a tiny fraction of potential immigrant students.

Not so after the war. The almost eight million GIs who took advantage of their educational benefits under the GI bill caused “the greatest wave of college building in American history” (Nash et al. 1986:885). White male GIs were able to take advantage of their educational benefits for college and technical training, so they were particularly well positioned to seize the opportunities provided by the new demands for professional, managerial, and technical labor. “It has been well documented that the GI educational benefits transformed American higher education and raised the educational level of that generation and generations to come. With many provisions for assistance in upgrading their educational attainments veterans pulled ahead of nonveterans in earning capacity. In the long run it was the nonveterans who had fewer opportunities” (Willenz 1983:165).

. . . .

Even more significantly, the postwar boom transformed the U.S. class structure—or at least its status structure—so that the middle class expanded to encompass most of the population. Before the war, most Jews, like most other Americans, were working class. Already upwardly mobile before the war relative to other immigrants, Jews floated high on this rising economic tide, and most of them entered the middle class. Still, even the high tide missed some Jews. As late as 1973, some 15 percent of New York’s Jews were poor or near poor, and in the 1960s, almost 25 percent of employed Jewish men remained manual workers (Steinberg 1989:89–90).

Educational and occupational GI benefits really constituted affirmative action programs for white males because they were decidedly not extended to African Americans or to women of any race. White male privilege was shaped against the backdrop of wartime racism and postwar sexism. During
and after the war, there was an upsurge in white racist violence against black servicemen in public schools, and in the KKK, which spread to California and New York (Dalfiume 1969:133-134). The number of lynchings rose during the war, and in 1943 there were antiblack race riots in several large northern cities. Although there was a wartime labor shortage, black people were discriminated against in access to well-paid defense industry jobs and in housing. In 1946 there were white riots against African Americans across the South, and in Chicago and Philadelphia as well. Gains made as a result of the wartime Civil Rights movement, especially employment in defense-related industries, were lost with peacetime conversion as black workers were the first fired, often in violation of seniority (Wynn 1976:114, 116). White women were also laid off, ostensibly to make jobs for demobilized servicemen, and in the long run women lost most of the gains they had made in wartime (Kessler-Harris 1982). We now know that women did not leave the labor force in any significant numbers but instead were forced to find inferior jobs, largely nonunion, parttime, and clerical.

Theoretically available to all veterans, in practice women and black veterans did not get anywhere near their share of GI benefits. Because women’s units were not treated as part of the military, women in them were not considered veterans and were ineligible for Veterans’ Administration (VA) benefits (Willenz 1983:168). The barriers that almost completely shut African-American GIs out of their benefits were more complex. In Wynn’s portrait (1976:115), black GIs anticipated starting new lives, just like their white counterparts. Over 43 percent hoped to return to school and most expected to relocate, to find better jobs in new lines of work. The exodus from the South toward the North and far West was particularly large. So it wasn’t a question of any lack of ambition on the part of African-American GIs.

Rather, the military, the Veterans’ Administration, the U.S. Employment Service, and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) effectively denied African-American GIs access to their benefits and to the new educational, occupational, and residential opportunities. Black GIs who served in the thoroughly segregated armed forces during World War II served under white officers, usually southerners (Binkin and Eitelberg 1982: Dalfiume 1969; Foner 1974; Johnson 1967; Nalty and MacGregor 1981). African-American soldiers were disproportionately given dishonorable discharges, which denied them veterans’ rights under the GI Bill. Thus between August and November 1946, 21 percent of white soldiers and 39 percent of black soldiers were dishonorably discharged. Those who did get an honorable discharge then faced the Veterans’ Administration and the U.S. Employment Service. The latter, which was responsible for job placements, employed very few African Americans, especially in the South. This meant that black veterans did not receive much employment information, and that the offers they did receive were for low-paid and menial jobs. “In one survey of 50 cities, the movement of blacks into peacetime employment was found to be lagging far behind that of white veterans: in Arkansas 95 percent of the placements made by the USES for Afro-Americans were in service or unskilled jobs” (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:218, and see 60-61). African Americans were also less likely than whites, regardless of GI status, to gain new jobs commensurate with their wartime jobs, and they suffered more heavily. For example, in San Francisco by 1948, Black Americans “had dropped back halfway to their pre-war employment status” (Wynn 1976:114, 116).10

Black GIs faced discrimination in the educational system as well. Despite the end of restrictions on Jews and other Euroethnics, African Americans were not welcome in white colleges. Black colleges were overcrowded, and the combination of segregation and prejudice made for few alternatives.
About twenty thousand black veterans attended college by 1947, most in black colleges, but almost as many, fifteen thousand, could not gain entry. Predictably, the disproportionately few African Americans who did gain access to their educational benefits were able, like their white counterparts, to become doctors and engineers, and to enter the black middle class (Walker 1970).

SUBURBANIZATION

In 1949, ensconced at Valley Stream, I watched potato farms turn into Levittown and into Idlewild (later Kennedy) Airport. This was a major spectator sport in our first years on suburban Long Island. A typical weekend would bring various aunts, uncles, and cousins out from the city. After a huge meal we would pile in the car—itself a novelty—to look at the bulldozed acres and comment on the matchbox construction. During the week, my mother and I would look at the houses going up within walking distance.

Bill Levitt built a basic 900-1,000-square-foot, somewhat expandable house for a lower-middle-class and working-class market on Long Island, and later in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (Gans 1967). Levittown started out as two thousand units of rental housing at sixty dollars a month, designed to meet the low-income housing needs of returning war vets, many of whom, like my Aunt Evie and Uncle Julie, were living in quonset huts. By May 1947, Levitt and Sons had acquired enough land in Hempstead Township on Long Island to build four thousand houses, and by the next February, he’d built six thousand units and named the development after himself. After 1948, federal financing for the construction of rental housing tightened, and Levitt switched to building houses for sale. By 1951 Levittown was a development of some fifteen thousand families.

At the beginning of World War II, about 33 percent of all U.S. families owned their houses. That percentage doubled in twenty years. Most Levittowners looked just like my family. They came from New York City or Long Island; about 17 percent were military, from nearby Mitchell Field; Levittown was their first house; and almost everyone was married. The 1947 inhabitants were over 75 percent white collar, but by 1950 more blue-collar families moved in, so that by 1951, “barely half” of the new residents were white collar, and by 1960 their occupational profile was somewhat more working class than for Nassau County as a whole. By this time too, almost one-third of Levittown’s people were either foreign-born or, like my parents, first-generation U.S. born (Dobriner 1963:91, 100).

The FHA was key to buyers and builders alike. Thanks to it, suburbia was open to more than GIs. People like us would never have been in the market for houses without FHA and VA low-down-payment, low-interest, long-term loans to young buyers. The FHA believed in racial segregation. Throughout its history, it publicly and actively promoted restrictive covenants. Before the war, these forbade sale to Jews and Catholics as well as to African Americans. The deed to my house in Detroit had such a covenant, which theoretically prevented it from being sold to Jews or African Americans. Even after the Supreme Court ended legal enforcement of restrictive covenants in 1948, the FHA continued to encourage builders to write them against African Americans. FHA underwriting manuals openly insisted on racially homogeneous neighborhoods, and their loans were made only in white neighborhoods. I bought my Detroit house in 1972 from Jews who were leaving a largely African-American neighborhood. By that time, after the 1968 Fair Housing Act, restrictive
covenants were a dead letter (although blockbusting by realtors was rapidly replacing it).

With the federal government behind them, virtually all developers refused to sell to African Americans. Palo Alto and Levittown, like most suburbs as late as 1960, were virtually all white. Out of 15,741 houses and 65,276 people, averaging 4.2 people per house, only 220 Levittowners, or 52 households, were "nonwhite." In 1958 Levitt announced publicly at a press conference to open his New Jersey development that he would not sell to black buyers. This caused a furor, since the state of New Jersey (but not the U.S. government) prohibited discrimination in federally subsidized housing. Levitt was sued and fought it, although he was ultimately persuaded by township ministers to integrate. . . .

The result of these policies was that African Americans were totally shut out of the suburban boom. An article in Harper's described the housing available to black GIs. "On his way to the base each morning, Sergeant Smith passes an attractive air-conditioned, FHA-financed housing project. It was built for service families. Its rents are little more than the Smiths pay for their shack. And there are half-a-dozen vacancies, but none for Negroes" (qtd. in Foner 1974:195).

Where my family felt the seductive pull of suburbia, Marshall Berman's experienced the brutal push of urban renewal. In the Bronx in the 1950s, Robert Moses's Cross-Bronx Expressway erased "a dozen solid, settled, densely populated neighborhoods like our own; . . . something like 60,000 working- and lower-middle-class people, mostly Jews, but with many Italians, Irish and Blacks thrown in, would be thrown out of their homes. . . . For ten years, through the late 1950s and early 1960s, the center of the Bronx was pounded and blasted and smashed" (1982:292).

Urban renewal made postwar cities into bad places to live. At a physical level, urban renewal reshaped them, and federal programs brought private developers and public officials together to create downtown central business districts where there had formerly been a mix of manufacturing, commerce, and working-class neighborhoods. Manufacturing was scattered to the peripheries of the city, which were ringed and bisected by a national system of highways. Some working-class neighborhoods were bulldozed, but others remained (Greer 1965; Hartman 1975; Squires 1989). In Los Angeles, as in New York's Bronx, the postwar period saw massive freeway construction right through the heart of old working-class neighborhoods. In East Los Angeles and Santa Monica, Chicano and African-American communities were divided in half or blasted to smithereens by the highways bringing Angelinos to the new white suburbs, or to make way for civic monuments like Dodger Stadium (Pardo 1990; Social and Public Arts Resource Center 1990:80, 1883:12-13).

Urban renewal was the other side of the process by which Jewish and other working-class Euroimmigrants became middle class. It was the push to suburbia's seductive pull. The fortunate white survivors of urban renewal headed disproportionately for suburbia, where they could partake of prosperity and the good life. . . .

The record is very clear that instead of seizing the opportunity to end institutionalized racism, the federal government did its best to shut and double seal the post-war window of opportunity in African Americans' faces. It consistently refused to combat segregation in the social institutions that were key for upward mobility: education, housing, and employment. Moreover, federal programs that were themselves designed to assist demobilized GIs and young families systematically discriminated against African Americans. Such programs reinforced white/nonwhite racial distinctions even as intrawhite racial-
ization was falling out of fashion. This other side of the coin, that white men of northwestern or southeastern European ancestry were treated equally in theory and in practice with regard to the benefits they received, was part of the larger postwar whitening of Jews and other eastern and southern Europeans.

The myth that Jews pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps ignores the fact that it took federal programs to create the conditions whereby the abilities of Jews and other European immigrants could be recognized and rewarded rather than denigrated and denied. The GI Bill and FHA and VA mortgages were forms of affirmative action that allowed male Jews and other Euro-American men to become suburban homeowners and get the training that allowed them—but not women vets or war workers—to become professionals, technicians, salesmen, and managers in a growing economy. Jews’ and other white ethnics’ upward mobility was the result of programs that allowed us to float on a rising economic tide. To African Americans, the government offered the cement boots of segregation, redlining, urban renewal, and discrimination.

Those racially skewed gains have been passed across the generations, so that racial inequality seems to maintain itself “naturally,” even after legal segregation ended. Today, in a shrinking economy where downward mobility is the norm, the children and grandchildren of the postwar beneficiaries of the economic boom have some precious advantages. For example, having parents who own their own homes or who have decent retirement benefits can make a real difference in young people’s ability to take out college loans or to come up with a down payment for a house. Even this simple inheritance helps perpetuate the gap between whites and nonwhites. Sure Jews needed ability, but ability was not enough to make it. The same applies even more in today’s long recession.

NOTES

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1. Indeed, Boasian and Du Boisian anthropology developed in active political opposition to this nativism; on Du Bois, see Harrison and Nonini 1992.

2. On immigrants as part of the industrial work force, see Steinberg 1989:36.

3. I thank Roger Sanjek for providing me with this source.

4. It was intended, as Davenport wrote to the president of the American Museum of Natural History, Henry Fairfield Osborne, as “an anthropological society... with a central governing body, self-elected and self-perpetuating, and very limited in members, and also confined to native Americans who are anthropologically, socially and politically sound, no Bolsheviks need apply” (Barkan 1991:67–68).

5. I thank Valerie Matsumoto for telling me about the Third case and Katya Gibel Azoulay for providing this information to me on the Virginia statute.

6. “The distinction between white and colored” has been “the only racial classification which has been carried through all the 15 censuses,” “Colored” consisted of “Negroes” and “other races”; Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, Korean, Hawaiian, Malay, Siamese, and Samoan. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1930:25, 26).

7. For why Jews entered colleges earlier than other immigrants, and for a challenge to views that attribute it to Jewish culture, see Steinberg 1989.

8. Indeed, Jewish social scientists were prominent in creating this ideology of the United States as a meritocracy. Most prominent of course was Nathan Glazer, but among them also were Charles Silberman and Marshall Sklare.
9. The belief was widespread that "the GI Bill . . . helped millions of families move into the middle class" (Nash et al. 1986:885). A study that compares mobility among veterans and nonveterans provides a kind of confirmation. In an unnamed small city in Illinois, Havighurst and his colleagues (1951) found no significant difference between veterans and nonveterans, but this was because apparently very few veterans used any of their GI benefits.

10. African Americans and Japanese Americans were the main target of wartime racism (see Murray 1992). By contrast, there were virtually no anti-German American or anti-Italian American policies in World War II (see Takaki 1989:337–406).

11. See Eichler 1982:5 for homeownership percentages; Jackson (1983:205) found an increase in families living in owner-occupied buildings, rising from 44 percent in 1934 to 65 percent in 1972; see Monkkonen 1988 on scarcity of mortgages; and Gelfand 1975, esp. chap. 6, on federal programs.

REFERENCES


"They Are Absolutely Obsessed with Us"

Anti-Arab Bias in American Discourse and Policy

Hussein Ibish

The persistent negative stereotyping of Arabs in American popular culture has been so often lamented that when discussing this subject one becomes, ironically, hostage to the oxymoron of a cliché which has had no cultural impact. The key industries of American mass culture, Hollywood and television, for decades have been bastions of anti-Arab stereotyping, and have consistently resisted positive or realistic representations of Arabs and Arab Americans. Negative representations in popular culture reinforce, and are reinforced by, biased and at times hostile journalism in the mainstream news media, academic polemics that urge a confrontational and aggressive approach to the U.S. role in the Middle East, and government programs and policies that are informed by anti-Arab bias and at times even involve the acting out of stereotypes received from popular culture. The result is a self-perpetuating vicious cycle of negativity about Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims, who have been all-too-successfully represented and accepted as "the enemy" in contemporary American culture. Thus, even as these stereotypes are increasingly critiqued and demystified by cultural observers, they retain their ubiquity and resulting negative impact on American relations with the Arab peoples and the circumstances for Arab Americans and Arabs living in the United States.

The positioning of the Arab as the "other" of contemporary American society ought, at the outset, to be viewed as an example, albeit a particularly egregious one, of what can be regarded as the universal political function of distinguishing self from other. Politically, the process of "othering" creates the boundaries that define group identity and allow for collective action. Definition of the self in terms of the other is a fundamental prerequisite of ideology, without which rationalization for collective social action is virtually impossible. Whether identified in class terms (i.e., the bourgeoisie), in religious terms (i.e., Jews or Muslims), or in ethnic terms, the other against which the collectivity is defined is a ubiquitous feature of political thought and action. As Ali A. Mazrui puts it, "The 'us' versus 'them' tendency is, in the political arena, almost universal."1 This process is not arbitrary, and when we see it at work it is answering a specific sociopolitical demand. In American national ideology the other has variously consisted of savage Indians, tyrannical English, corrupt Mexicans, treacherous Confederates, decadent Spaniards, baby-killing Germans, fiendish Japanese, the Evil Empire of World Communism, and now the Green Menace of radical Islam. The need for a demonic common enemy has been most strikingly satisfied when "national interest" has required an ideological and emotional rationale, as in the examples cited previously. The ideological demand, and concomitant public appetite, for a vilified national enemy makes the task of the propagandist under such circumstances one of the simplest social functions—one can hardly fail to engender the requisite loathing to satisfy the ideological demand, no matter how crude, preposterous, or incompetent the defamatory representation of the enemy is. Hence, stereotyping is also strongly linked to "bad art,”
since it provides a most convenient shortcut for the lazy and unimaginative cultural worker in search of villains.

The phenomenon of anti-Arab representation in American culture, the othering of the Arab American and the Arab world, especially popular culture, is undoubtedly overdetermined: it would be virtually impossible to single out a discrete locus for these negative representations, and any attempt to do so is bound to be an exercise in oversimplification. There are, however, a number of important factors in the equation that demand investigation and acknowledgment. As has been demonstrated at length by Edward Said and Michael Suleiman, among others, contemporary bias against Arabs in the United States draws heavily on a longstanding Western antipathy for its Islamic rival.2 Orientalism and its antecedents laid the groundwork and set in place most of the basic stereotypes that inform our current anti-Arab prejudices. As Michael Suleiman has pointed out, this generalized inheritance from Western culture has combined with several more specifically American ideas to create especially favorable conditions for the positive reception of anti-Arab stereotypes in the American psyche. These particular American tendencies, as Suleiman demonstrates, include "a greater emphasis on the Bible as a literal representation of what happened in the Middle East" in ancient times, the identification of the contemporary Arab people with those peoples of the biblical Middle East who are cast as villains or the enemies of God and the Hebrews, and an identification of many of the Puritan founders of early American society with the ancient Israelites.3 In this century, Zionists have astutely reversed this identification, casting themselves in the role of the pioneers battling a hostile natural environment and hostile indigenous savages to bring bounty and civilization to a barren land. Thus the Arab in general, and the Palestinian in particular, becomes identified with the Native American. For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi-held territory was routinely referred to as "Indian country" by American military personnel.4 Interestingly, the celebrated Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish has also embraced this identification between Arabs, especially Palestinians, and Native Americans, but from the perspective of colonial victim rather than colonial hero. Such specifically American orientations have promoted the development of a particularly negative image of the Arab in the United States during the twentieth century.

As our model of the othering process anticipates, the emergence of this exceptionally negative image has been clearly linked to political developments during the past fifty years, in particular the tension between competing American ambitions for dominance in the Middle East and Arab ambitions for greater independence from Western influence, as well as the problem of Zionism and colonialism in Palestine. As the power of Britain and France waned in the years following the Second World War, the colonial baton in the Middle East was gradually passed from these old imperial powers to the United States. American interest in controlling the oil resources of the Persian Gulf has never been a secret or the subject of any sustained denial. This interest has repeatedly placed United States foreign policy at odds with political movements that express the aspirations of millions of Arabs, such as Arab nationalism or, more recently, revolutionary Islamism. Since the early part of this century, Arab nationalism has emphasized a break with Western powers and influence, a greater Arab unity and independence, and, of course, control of the natural resources of the Middle East, above all, oil. This anti-colonial orientation of Arab nationalism was, both in general and at specific moments of crisis, incompatible with the neocolonial role the United States aspired to play in the Arab world, especially the Persian Gulf region and Iran. Thus the United States repeatedly found itself at odds with Arab nationalist
movements and regimes, and some of the leading "villains" in the American worldview of past decades include prominent secular Arab nationalist leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser, Yassir Arafat, Muammar Qaddafi, and Saddam Hussein. More recently, the rise of revolutionary Islamist movements, as secular Arab nationalism is increasingly regarded as both a proven failure and an inauthentic mimicry of Western political movements, has created a new set of enemies in the American worldview. Islamism in the Arab world received a significant boost from the Iranian revolution and the successful "jihad" against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, which suggested that both neocolonial superpowers could be successfully ousted from Muslim lands. The status and influence of Islamist movements continue to develop in many parts of the Arab world and, much as Arab nationalism had before it, sets itself against Western influence, both cultural and political, in the Middle East. Islamists, including Ayatollah Khomeini, the leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah, and Osama Bin Laden, have emerged in recent years as the quintessential international villains in the American perspective.

A second major factor in the development of the heightened form of anti-Arab prejudice in contemporary American thought is the Zionist movement and its highly successful propaganda campaign to cast Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular as the villains in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Against the cultural and political background described previously, and operating for decades without significant challenge or critique, the Zionist movement portrayed Arab resistance to the establishment of an ethnically cleansed colonial settler-state in Palestine as a function of Arab fanaticism, intolerance, and anti-Semitism (a theme I shall investigate further). Pro-Israeli propaganda ("hasbara"), particularly emanating from Hollywood and certain forms of extremely biased journalism, has played a major role in casting the Arab in his or her most insidious stereotype—that of the terrorist. This is without question the dominant and most damaging, not to mention unwarranted, image of the Arab in contemporary American culture. It is so pervasive that Arabs are easily and arbitrarily blamed by irresponsible journalists and politicians for events that they have had nothing to do with, such as the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City or the crash of TWA Flight 800. Ironically, although it has been clearly established that Arabs were not involved in these events, the effect has not been to expose the fallacy at the heart of the stereotypes that gave rise to the error, but rather to reinforce an irrational and unconscious identification between Arabs and terrorism. The two remain as firmly linked in the cultural landscape as ever and expressions of surprise that Arabs were not responsible for such acts in effect reiterated the stereotypes that produced the rushes to judgment. Thus the Arab remains the quintessential "terrorist" and, in cultural terms, continues to bear a measure of guilt for these events, since these tragedies look like the kind of things for which Arabs are believed to be typically responsible. So insidious are the processes reinforcing these associations that papers such as this one, which attempt to debunk the stereotypes, may ironically have the subtle effect of further solidifying the association between Arabs and terrorism. The "I am not a terrorist" discourse so prevalent among Arab Americans in this sense falls into a trap not unlike that set in the proverbial "candidate's nightmare" question, "when are you going to stop beating your wife?" a question for which there can be no constructive answer. Until we develop an alternative discourse, however, Arab Americans are going to remain in what may well be the self-defeating position I am taking here, of calling attention to the stereotypes by analyzing and objecting to them.

These associations are most damagingly propagated by a widespread but particularly insidious form of "journalism" which makes a fetish out of an al-
leged connection between Islam, traditional Arab culture, and terrorism, and which is calculated to spread fear and hatred of Arabs and Islam. The worst work of this kind has been done by Steven Emerson, who has argued that almost all major Arab and Muslim organizations in the United States are fronts for or supporters of “terrorist groups.” His 1994 television documentary, *Jihad in America*, which was widely broadcast by PBS, advanced the dubious and unsubstantiated thesis that there was an extensive fund-raising network in the United States for “Middle Eastern terrorists.” Consisting of little more than innuendo, guilt by association, and unsubstantiated allegations, *Jihad in America* has come to be regarded by many professional journalists as an embarrassing piece of fear-mongering, akin in tone and substance to Red-baiting screeds of the McCarthy era. Yet the atmosphere in the immediate aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing was such that “Jihad in America” won the prestigious Polk Award for Excellence in Journalism. In retrospect, respected journalists like Robert Friedan have accused Emerson of attempting to “create mass hysteria against American Arabs.”6 Emerson has been quick to point the finger at Arabs for any number of tragedies and disasters, publicly blaming Arabs for the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City and for the crash of TWA Flight 800. Emerson, then a CBS News consultant, told the nation that the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing exhibited “a Middle Eastern trait,” insofar as it “was done with the intent to inflict as many casualties as possible.”6 In spite of his penchant for false accusation and wild statements, such as his 1994 claim that the aim of pro-Palestinian Muslims in the United States was the “mass murder of all Jews, Christians, and moderate Muslims,” and his well-documented links with Israeli intelligence operatives and right-wing ideologues, Emerson is still called upon as a “terrorism expert” by some of the major American media. Emerson’s work is merely the most egregious example of this kind of Arab-bashing, which is by no means unusual in contemporary American journalism.

As Emerson’s work has become increasingly discredited, much of the anti-Arab tone and substance of his work has been taken up by one of his former employers, Daniel Pipes, director of the Philadelphia-based pro-Israel Middle East Forum. Like Emerson, Pipes was quick to blame Arabs and Muslims for the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. Pipes told *USA Today* on the day after the bombing that “the West is under attack. . . . People need to understand that this is just the beginning. The fundamentalists are on the upsurge, and they make it very clear that they are targeting us. They are absolutely obsessed with us.”8 In the *New York Post*, Pipes dismissed the very identity of the Palestinian people by arguing that three of the most prominent Palestinians, Yasser Arafat, Edward Said, and George Antonius, were never Palestinians at all, and that they had “decided at various points in the 20th century—the 1920s, 1950s, 1970s—to become Palestinians.” Far from a national identity, Pipes concludes, “Being Palestinian, in other words, is a good career move.”9 In the *Los Angeles Times*, Pipes claimed that most American Muslim organizations “aspire to make the United States a Muslim country, perhaps along the Iranian or Sudanese models.” Echoing Emerson’s dark conspiracy theories from *Jihad in America*, Pipes warns that “Some of this ilk even talk about overthrowing the U.S. government and replacing it with an Islamic one. Although it sounds bizarre, this attitude attracts serious and widespread support among Muslims, some of whom debate whether peaceful means are sufficient or whether violence is a necessary option.”10 Pipes also claims that the overwhelming majority of Muslims harbor intense anti-Jewish beliefs. In the right-wing magazine *Commentary*, for example, Pipes alleged that “At huge conventions closed to the press and public, in speeches and publications that tend to be couched in the historic Muslim languages
rather than in English, nearly every Muslim organization in the United States—emphatically including those that carefully maintain a proper demeanor for public, English-language consumption—spews forth a blatant and vicious anti-Semitism, a barrage of bias, calumny, and conspiracy mongering of a sort that has otherwise all but disappeared from American discourse.11 Ironically, Pipes, whose stock in trade is conspiracy theories about fabricated Palestinian identities and Islamic plots to overthrow the U.S. government, is the author of a book on the political functioning of conspiracy theories, *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes, and Where It Comes From*.

Such shoddy journalism has its academic corollaries, too numerous to list, but certainly the most influential of these is Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Huntington, who is widely regarded as one of the most distinguished and influential political scientists in the United States, argues that an unavoidable conflict is emerging between the West and the Islamic world, among other foes. Huntington’s arguments about the uniquely violent and conflict-oriented nature of Muslims and Islamic societies are “demonstrated” by social pseudoscience, including charts purporting to quantify the “Militarism of Muslim and Christian Countries” and “Ethnopolitical” and “Ethnic” conflicts. From this he concludes that “Muslims have problems living peaceably with their neighbors.”12 Huntington states simply that “Muslim bellicosity and violence are late-twentieth century facts which neither Muslims nor non-Muslims can deny,” and that “quantitative evidence from every disinterested source conclusively demonstrates its validity.”13 Huntington’s thesis of a “clash of civilizations” has proved highly influential in academic, journalistic, and governmental circles, and, although it has been widely criticized, it has clearly left its mark on contemporary American worldviews about Arabs, Arab Americans, and the Middle East.

The United States government itself has actively adopted and promoted anti-Arab sentiments through foreign policies that are biased and hostile to the interests of millions of Arab people, through domestic repression of organized Arab American political activity, and by enacting stereotypical representations in government activities. The double standards that inform the U.S. government’s approach to the question of Palestine, which can be best characterized as a total and unwavering commitment to the interests of the Israeli state and a systematic rejection of Palestinian human and national rights, play a major role in the vicious cycle of self-reinforcing negative representations of Arabs in American culture and American policies that reflect an anti-Arab bias. These double standards are expressed through the massive financial, diplomatic, and military support for Israel from the United States, which appear to be entirely unrelated to Israeli compliance with international norms of conduct. Perhaps most galling to Arabs are the double standards revealed in the steadfast American diplomatic support for Israeli human rights violations. One particularly shocking example of this was the role of the Clinton administration in blocking criticism of Israel at the United Nations over the 1996 Qana massacre, in which the Israeli military bombed a U.N. observer camp in southern Lebanon, killing more than one hundred Lebanese civilians. Another astonishing instance was the 9 February 1999 U.N. General Assembly vote convening a conference on the enforcement of the Geneva Convention in the Israeli-occupied territories, which was opposed by only the United States and Israel. Such actions reflect and promote a prejudice that devalues the rights, including the most basic human rights, and interests of Arabs, and champions the rights, interests, and ambitions of others, most notably Israelis. The news media, guided to a great degree by the government on foreign policy matters and informed by the same cultural background as policy-making officials, re-
peat these prejudices and communicate them to the public. Double standards wherein some peoples' rights are important while others' are less so, some peoples' suffering is interesting while others' is not, and some people are properly the subjects of history while others are its objects, typify Western journalism on the Middle East. One of the most striking features of U.S. news reporting on events in Palestine, for example, is that it is almost always the Israeli actors who are subjectified, whatever their role. So, for example, when Israelis are victims of Palestinian violence, emphasis is on the suffering of the victims and their families, but when an Israeli such as Baruch Goldstein massacres Palestinians in a mosque, the focus is on the Israeli subject, on what type of twisted thinking could have driven an Israeli army reservist, an American doctor from Crown Heights no less, to do such a thing. In almost all incidents of violence in Palestine, to Western news reports the Palestinians, whether victims or perpetrators, remain a nameless, faceless mass. The bias is even more stark in reporting on Arab-Israeli violence in Lebanon, where the death of each Israeli soldier is accorded great significance, while the deaths of Lebanese civilians are noted in passing, if at all. One of the most respected and accomplished Western correspondents in the Middle East, Robert Fisk of the British newspaper the Independent, explained at a recent gathering at the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine in Washington, D.C., that he declines to use the term “terrorism” or “terrorist” in covering violence in Palestine and Lebanon because he believes that in this context the term has lost its meaning and is now simply an ethnic pejorative against Arabs, to whom it is exclusively attached. Discriminatory policies, slanted official rhetoric, and biased reportage thus become mutually reinforcing.

Certainly double standards that indicate a disregard for the rights of Arabs are apparent in the attitude both the government and the media of the United States have taken toward Iraq in the 1990s. Journalists have enthusiastically joined with government officials in demonizing Iraq, the Iraqi people, and above all President Saddam Hussein, in the buildup to the 1991 Gulf War and since. To recall only one small example of this disturbing phenomenon, the well-known news magazine The New Republic featured a cover in September 1990 sporting a photograph of Saddam Hussein that had been altered to make the Iraqi leader's moustache look more like Adolph Hitler's and that, in a bad pun, was prominently titled “Furor in the Gulf.” The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (which was disapproved of by a great many Arabs and Arab Americans) notwithstanding, the implacable hostility of the United States toward Iraq has been extraordinary. In particular, the genocidal effects of the U.S.-enforced sanctions against Iraq, which have killed well over a million Iraqis, mostly children, have reinforced the impression among both Arabs and Americans that Arab people in general are seen by the U.S. government to be the enemies of this country. The chillingly bland observation by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that the deaths of over 500,000 Iraqi children have been "worth it" for U.S. foreign policy aims clearly suggests to Americans and Middle Easterners alike that the lives of Arabs, including Arab children, are not particularly valued in the eyes of the United States government. The news media has generally either ignored or downplayed the fact that, according to the United Nations, more than a million individuals have died needlessly over the past seven years in Iraq, and coverage of what many people regard as a humanitarian catastrophe at least, if not an outright genocide, has been amazingly thin. Arabs, in both the United States and the Middle East, are convinced that there are few other ethnic groups whose needless suffering on such a massive scale would be tolerated and ignored, let alone deliberately inflicted. Again one is hard pressed not to see a connection between the dehumanizing representations of Arabs in American
popular culture and the casual manner in which American policy dispenses with Arab rights and Arab lives.

Moreover, President Clinton’s protestations that his 1998 bombing attacks against Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan were not reflective of an anti-Islamic or anti-Arab animus or a generalized conflict between the United States and the Arab World in fact served only to reinforce this very impression. After all, why would one feel the need to specifically deny that these attacks were aimed at targets whose principal characteristics are that they are Arab or Muslim, if this were not a reasonable conclusion, likely to be widespread? Attacks on a manifestly innocent pharmaceutical factory in Sudan and on training camps in Afghanistan for guerrillas who fight Indian rule in Kashmir would appear to have had no logical relevance to the as-yet-unsolved embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, for which the attacks were supposed to be retaliation. Yet, as symbolic targets, they make sense in the context of such recurring themes of the “green menace” as global cabals of Islamist radicals, regionwide terrorist networks that cut across all ideological lines, and the fear of chemical, biological, and nuclear terrorism, which invokes the specter of Saddam Hussein. These themes, familiar to anyone who has been to the movies lately, draw together all Middle Easterners and Muslims who would oppose U.S. policies in the Middle East into one undifferentiated terrorist mass, so that any target in the Muslim world potentially becomes a “legitimate” focus of aggression or vengeance. Indeed, the destabilizing, militarily meaningless, and politically counterproductive cruise missile attacks against Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998 make sense only in terms of a hysterical discourse that in effect brands all Arabs and Muslims as terrorists and therefore function precisely as attacks on Arabs and Islam in general. Official American denials only serve to reinforce this effect, both in the United States and in the Middle East. A similar effect generated by the news media can be seen in the recent spate of implausible news stories suggesting that Abu Nidal, who had been reportedly on his deathbed in Egypt, and Osama Bin Laden, who has been living in caves in Afghanistan for years, had been brought to Baghdad by Saddam Hussein in order to form a new “terrorism international.” This silly tale was based on effacing all ideological and other obvious differences between these individuals, whose only connection is that they have been branded Arab arch-terrorists by the government and media, again creating the impression of an undifferentiated terrorist mass.

Arab Americans, particularly those engaged in organized political activity, have encountered official political repression and discrimination that is often informed by anti-Arab bias or stereotypes and that, in turn, reinforce those stereotypes. Arabs, Muslims, and those traveling to and from the Middle East are routinely singled out for often abusive special security measures by airline security and customs officials, based on mandatory government profiling systems. While the specific content of these profiles is secret, the discriminatory nature and disparate impact of such profiling has been well documented by Arab American civil rights organizations such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). Though the discriminatory nature of the profiling system strongly indicates that it is based in large measure on racist stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been unable to document a single instance where an individual who posed a danger to airport or airplane security has been apprehended or identified through the profiling system. Such pointless but abusive and discriminatory profiling is a clear example of a government policy that has a mutually reinforcing relationship with popular stereotypes and negative representations of Arab people. The CEO of Northwest Airlines
forcefully made this point when he addressed the National Convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in June of 1996. In response to complaints that airport profiling had led to discrimination against Arab and Arab American travelers, he candidly stated that even if airline agents were given directives not to discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, their behavior would still be affected by what they saw about Arabs in films and on television.

Since the passage of the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Immigration Acts, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has begun using secret evidence in politically charged deportation cases. As a result at least twenty-five individuals, all politically active Arabs and Muslims, are currently incarcerated without charge on the basis of secret evidence, which they are unable to challenge or even evaluate. Most of these individuals have resided peacefully in the United States for a number of years, and many have spouses and children who are U.S. citizens. Some have satisfied an immigration judge that they would face certain persecution if returned to their home country. Yet almost all of them remain detained because an INS prosecutor has presented a judge with secret, and therefore unchallenged and untested, evidence alleging that the individual is a "terrorist" or has some "terrorist" affiliation. James Woolsey, former director of the CIA, told a senate judiciary subcommittee on 8 October 1998 that "The INS' procedure in these sorts of cases—uncannily reminiscent of Franz Kafka's The Trial—is to collect rumors and unfounded allegations, not investigate them, submit them in camera [i.e., secretly] to the immigration judge, and then demand that the individual in question be held in a threat to national security if he does not succeed in refuting the charges of which he is unaware." Woolsey, who is defending six Iraqi men being held on the basis of secret evidence, added that a clear anti-Arab racist bias was present in some of the secret evidence the government had submitted against his clients which was later released, stating that "In ex parte testimony, belatedly declassified, more than one interrogator explicitly expressed bias (e.g., Arabs 'lie an awful lot,' 'there is no guilt in the Arab world') to the immigration court."19 In an August 1998 letter to Attorney General Janet Reno and INS Commissioner Doris Meissner, Senators Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), the chair and ranking member of the senate subcommittee on immigration, expressed "grave concerns" about the use of secret evidence. "Some believe that recent actions create the appearance that the INS may be using secret evidence only in cases against Arab immigrants," wrote the senators. "This is especially disturbing since many of these cases appear to be based not on any actions of the immigrants, but rather on their purported associations," they added.

The U.S. government has also employed stereotypical negative representations of Arabs in its law enforcement and military operations. Among the most notorious of these incidents was the 1980 "Abscam" scandal, in which the FBI had an Italian-American agent posing as a stereotypical Arab "oil sheikh" bribe several members of Congress, whose corruption was captured on videotape. As former U.S. Senator James Abourezk recalls in his memoirs, "After the scandal broke in the press, FBI Director William Webster was asked why the agent had been dressed as an Arab. He responded that it was necessary to choose some ethnic group that the public would believe was capable of bribing congressmen. And yet, no Arab or Arab American had ever been accused of bribing an American politician. There had been, of course, lots of publicity about Koreans, Wasps, Jews, and members of other ethnic groups convicted of bribery, but not about Arabs. Why Webster, ordinarily a respected public servant, felt it was necessary to use any ethnic group is a mystery, but his choice was solid evidence of the bottoming out of the image of
Arabs in the United States." Abourezk goes on to state flatly that the "use of a phony Arab figure in Abscam was the direct result of the seven-year escalation, following the oil embargo, of anti-Arab racism that was projected by the media and cheered on by the Israeli lobby." Dismay over "Abscam" and the unabashed endorsement by the FBI of some of the most malicious anti-Arab stereotypes in the operation led directly to the founding of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the largest Arab American political and civil rights organization in the United States.

Almost twenty years after "Abscam," the government continues to enact, and thereby reinforce, negative stereotypes of Arabs. In the middle of March 1999, The Marine Warfighting Lab conducted another in its ongoing series of "Urban Warrior" exercises at Monterey and Oakland, California. The exercise involved simulations of urban warfare, with several mock foreign locations created for different scenarios. Among the most troubling aspects of the exercise was the simulation of "ethnic groups" by trainees from the Defense Language Institute in the mock urban settings. These actors portrayed stereotypical "Arabs" and "Koreans" in urban crowd situations, taunting the Marines, serving as distractions in the hunts for the "terrorists" in their midst, and begging for help in staged disasters. In this case, the U.S. military apparently found it useful to promote stereotypes and anticipate the ethnicity of enemies and bystanders in future missions for its training exercises. Such exercises are likely to reinforce negative impressions of the ethnic groups and notions of who are "the enemy," while adding nothing essential to training for urban conflict. Just as in "Abscam," the stereotypes used in the Urban Warrior exercises are not only offensive but utterly gratuitous.

The government and news media are, if anything, outdone in defamation of Arabs by the entertainment industry. The shameful history of Hollywood and U.S. television programs in projecting negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims (which are often wrongly treated as identical sets by the entertainment industry and, consequently, the public) has been more than adequately catalogued in the work of scholars such as Jack Shaheen, Edward Said, Michael Suleiman, and Yahya Kamalipour. These critics have charted the development of dominant entertainment industry stereotypes of Arabs from the romantic image of the barbaric and hyper-sexualized desert bedouin of the silent film era to the more unambiguous corrupt oil sheikhs and anti-Western, anti-Semitic fanatics of more recent decades. The ubiquity of negative images and the consistency of the anti-Arab stereotypes that are deployed has often been noted. As Jay Stone asked, "When was the last time you saw an Arab character in a movie who was anything but one of the three B′s (billionaire, bomber, belly dancer)?" Yet at present the dominant and most damaging stereotype is that of the crazed Arab/Muslim terrorist, which has become a staple of the action film genre, among others. Most observers agree that the 1960 film, Exodus, a shamelessly distorted account of the founding of the State of Israel, was a turning point in Hollywood′s treatment of Arabs as a demonic and thoroughly evil people who typically commit unspeakable acts against the innocent. The image of the Arab as quintessential terrorist competed with the more dominant image of the corrupt and boorish oil sheikh in Hollywood movies during the 1970s.

By the 1980s, the image of the terrorist, increasingly cast as a hysterical Islamic militant, superseded all other stereotypes as the dominant Hollywood characterization of the Arab. This was the villain of choice in countless low-budget action films of the 1980s, many produced by Canon Films of the Israeli Golan and Globus production company. Films such as Wanted Dead or Alive (1987), Iron Eagle (1986), Delta Force (1986), and many others did their best to promote the ugliest stereotypes of the cruel but cowardly Arab ter-
rorist as the essential and fundamental enemy of the West and Israel specifically, and decency and humanity in general. In the main these films were, however, characterized also by a distinctly low-budget, low-brow quality that partially helped to offset their defamatory content. The 1990s saw a mainstreaming of these images into higher budget, higher profile films, a process that culminated in the 20th Century Fox blockbuster True Lies (1994), a high-budget, high-profile vehicle for Arnold Schwarzenegger. While True Lies clearly indicates the arrival of the Arab-demonizing action flick at the top of the Hollywood pyramid, the film retains the cartoonish and preposterous qualities of its low-budget precursors.

The same cannot be said of 20th Century Fox’s latest Arab-bashing film, The Siege (1998). Compared to most of the earlier action films featuring crazed Arab terrorists, including True Lies, which never asked to be taken seriously, The Siege is a complicated and relatively sophisticated film. It presents itself as a serious intervention in a major public policy and political debate about how the United States should respond to a potential “terrorist threat.” Indeed, and in yet another instance of the symbiotic and self-reinforcing relationship between discriminatory policies and defamatory representations, the inspiration for The Siege was one of the most troubling government documents to be uncovered in recent years—a Justice Department contingency plan for the mass arrest of thousands of Arabs in the United States, their detention in concentration camps in Florida and Louisiana, and their possible deportation. The Siege depicts a savage terrorist campaign by Arab Americans in New York City, and the government’s response of rounding up all young Arab males in detention camps...

Of all the stereotypes propagated through films such as these and other forms of entertainment, as well as through biased journalism and discriminatory policies, none could be more unfair, distressing, or damaging than that of the Arab as anti-Jewish anti-Semite. This stereotype places the Arab a double burden of anti-Semitism, whereby the Arab is perceived as a Semite through the lens of traditional European anti-Semitic stereotypes, and at the same time is identified as the arch-Jewish anti-Semite. Arabs are bearing the burden, therefore, not only of being the target of stereotypical Western anti-Semitic images, but also of the historical responsibility for a culture of ethnic and religious anti-Semitism which belongs, in fact, to European, not Arab, civilization. Thus the Arab becomes both the target and the supposed source of the worst forms of Western anti-Semitism.

Many of the images used to defame Arabs, especially in the past fifty years, draw on stock images of the Western anti-Semitic canon. As Jack Shaheen has pointed out, “Resembling the hook-nosed screen Arab wearing burnooses and thobes, screen Jews [in Nazi-inspired German films] also dress differently than the films’ protagonists, wearing yarmulkes and black robes. They too appear as unkempt money-grubbing caricatures who seek world domination, who worship a different God, who kill innocents, and who lust after blond virgins.” The caricature of Semitic racial characteristics that typifies traditional Western anti-Jewish imagery has been largely transferred to the Arab as overt anti-Jewish anti-Semitism has fallen out of fashion. The similarities between the image of the wealthy, filthy, greedy, vulgar oil sheikh and anti-Jewish imagery are obvious. Yet the parallel also applies to most of the other negative images of Arabs in Western culture today, including the crazed religious fanatic who worships a cruel and alien God. The rise of anti-Arab stereotypes in the United States in recent decades in many ways represents the continued thriving of traditional Western anti-Semitism, in a new guise.

All the more ironic then that one of the most pervasive stereotypes of Arabs is that of the Arab racist, particularly the anti-Jewish anti-Semite.
This theme is a standard feature of the defamatory films, television programs, and journalism misrepresenting the Arab-Israeli conflict. The main idea is that opposition to Israel is driven not by concern for Palestinian human and national rights or the injustices of colonialism, but by a hatred toward or dislike of Jews that is supposedly characteristic of Arabic culture and/or Islam. This is often accompanied with rubbish about three thousand years of warfare or an age-old conflict in Palestine, when, of course, the Zionist movement itself is barely one hundred years old. In this way, the passionate Arab opposition to the Zionist movement can be neatly explained without allowing that the establishment of the Israeli state came at another people’s expense. Some of the most extreme apologists for Israel in the press and in Congress have taken to insisting that the anger and resentment Palestinians living under Israeli occupation feel toward their oppressors come not from the experience of having been ethnically cleansed or living under colonial rule and foreign military occupation, without rights or citizenship, but is produced instead by a calculated campaign of indoctrination of hatred in Palestinian schools and media. Resistance to colonialism, resentment of oppression, and struggling for one’s human rights thereby become the product of miseducation, indoctrination, and a deep-seated cultural and religious antipathy toward Jews.

While it is true that some elements of Western anti-Semitic discourse have begun to creep into the rhetoric of those living under Israeli occupation, such ideas are still clearly marginal and alien to Arab cultural precepts. There is no foundation for these intolerant attitudes in Arab culture or Islam, and their influence is likely to remain marginal at best, even though they might correspond to the ideological needs of those resisting Israeli occupation.

The characterization of the Arab-Israeli conflict as being driven by traditions of Arab intolerance and anti-Jewish hatred is an attempt to rob Arabs of the right to object to colonialism and oppression, lest they be labeled “anti-Semitic.” It is an attempt to shift the primary burden for centuries of religious and ideological anti-Semitism in the West, which has no corollary in Arab tradition, and which culminated in the Holocaust, onto the Arab peoples. The historical record, however, is clear. Even more disturbingly, this discourse threatens to rob Arabs of the heritage of an extraordinary tradition of tolerance and coexistence. The only appropriate response is to reject this stereotype more vigorously than any other, and reclaim and extend this legacy of tolerance and coexistence as robustly as we can. Certainly this is a response that is suggested by the model of identification with which we began. Perhaps the seeds of an alternative discourse on Arab Americans lie in such a gesture, which dispenses with the self-defeating “I am not a terrorist” motif and allows for a far more constructive dialogue. Let the next discussion begin with this.

NOTES
13. Ibid, 258.
23. Shaheen, Arab and Muslim Stereotyping, 15.
Arab Americans and American Muslims: A Case Study of Emerging Prejudice

Richard T. Schaefer

The Arab American and Muslim American communities are among the most rapidly growing subordinate groups in the United States. Westerners often confuse the two groups. Actually, Arabs are an ethnic group, and Muslims are a religious group. Many Arabs are not Muslims, and most Muslims are not Arabs.

This relationship between religion and an ethnic group that crosses many nationalities is illustrated in Figure 2.6. As we can see, one cannot accurately identify the Muslim faithful by nationality alone, and clearly being Arab does not define one as being a follower of Islam.

Arab immigration to the United States began in the late 1800s and then picked up dramatically in the 1960s. Initially, Arab immigrants were more likely to be Christian, and the first wave assimilated into many aspects of American culture. However, there are now an estimated 3 million people with Arab ancestry in the United States. This rising population has led to the development of small Arab retail centers in several cities including Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan; Los Angeles; Chicago; New York City; and Washington, D.C. Many Arab Americans cling to the culture of their particular origin, which varies widely. Indeed, Arabs constitute an ethnic group found in twenty-two nations of North Africa and the Middle East, including Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia. Obviously, to speak of Arabs (or Arab Americans) does not take into account the wide cultural differences and divisions within this group (Samhan 2001).

Muslims are followers of Islam, the world's largest faith after Christianity. Although they have some beliefs in common with Christians, such as belief in a common descent from Adam and Eve and reverence for the Virgin Mary and Jesus, Islam is strongly influenced by the teachings of the Koran (or Al-Qur'an), the writs of the seventh-century prophet Muhammed. Islamic believers are divided into a variety of faiths and sects, such as Sunnis and Shiites. These divisions sometimes result in antagonisms between the members, just as there are religious rivalries between Christian denominations. At present, there are at least 2 million Muslims in the United States, of whom about 42 percent are African American, 24 percent are South Asian, 12 percent are Arab, and 22 percent are "other" (Paik 2001).

Although mosques have become more numerous, with more than 1,500 today, mosques still attract a different kind of attention than a steeple atop a Lutheran church. For many people in the United States, the mosque does not represent religious freedom and diversity or even a curiosity but a "foreign threat." Muslim groups have found some communities blocking their efforts to build religious centers. Local authorities may require the building be stripped of cultural symbols and even to forgo the traditional dome. Even after taking these steps, mosques or Islamic centers often are victim of vandalism. Yet there are also signs of acceptance. College campuses experiencing growing numbers of Muslims are adjusting by hiring part-time imams to minister to their needs, dedicating space for Muslims' prayer said five times a day, and providing for the dietary restrictions of the Muslim diet (Ahmed-Ullah 2000; Paik 2000; Wilgoren 2001).

News events have fueled the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim feeling. Activities carried out by Arabs or Muslims, including the 1972 terrorist raid at the Munich Olympics and the
1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, contributed to the negative image. The attack of September 11, 2001, engineered by Arab Muslim extremists, caused many Americans to associate Arab and Muslim Americans with America's enemy in the war against terrorism. As the economy softened and taxpayers paid for
increased security, Arab and Muslim Americans became the scapegoat in many people's minds. Vandalism of mosques, attacks on Arab-appearing people, and calls for widespread dragnets based on ethnicity or religion were common. Terrorism, even domestic terrorism, often is the product of homegrown troublemakers, as evidenced by hundreds of attacks on abortion clinics and the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The immediate aftermath of the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City showed the willingness of the public to accept stereotypes. Many television news reports indicated that Islamic fundamentalists or Arab terrorists were the prime suspects. A Jordanian American who lives in Oklahoma City was arrested in London but cleared of any involvement in the terrorist attack. Nevertheless, in the first 3 days after the bombing, there were at least 292 attacks against Muslims in the United States. In the end, two White American men were convicted in the bombing, but this hardly erased the pain felt by many Arab Americans and Muslim Americans about the way in which they were scapegoated (Brooke 1995; Zogby 1998).

In light of these suspicions, some citizens have found themselves under special surveillance because of racial profiling at airports and border checkpoints. As noted earlier, this profiling became especially intense after September 11, 2001. The profiling has moved into everyday life. Muslim women who choose to don hair scarves or hijab, in keeping with their tradition to dress modestly, encounter harassment from strangers in the street and find many employers insisting that they shed the covering if they want to get a job or expect to be promoted. These citizens find it difficult to understand these attitudes in a nation of immigrants grounded in religious freedom.

Consider the particular case of some 100,000 Afghan Americans, typically Muslim but, like the people of Afghanistan, not considered Arabs. After September 11, Afghan Americans found themselves specially targeted for prejudice and were understandably concerned as the United States bombed Afghanistan in search of terrorist groups. Some Afghan Americans talk of leaving for Afghanistan, generally out of a desire to reestablish family ties. Like other Muslim immigrants, they came to the United States seeking better education, improved housing, and higher standard of living in a country they perceived as tolerant of religious diversity. Most came in the 1970s and
now have children who are more American than Afghan. Increasingly, their family
ties, not just the economic ones, are in the United States (Ritter and Squier 2002).

Arab Americans and Muslim Americans, like other subordinate groups, have not
responded passively to their treatment. Organizations have been created in their
communities to counter negative stereotypes and to offer schools material respond-
ing to the labeling that has occurred. Even before 2001, Arab Americans and Muslim
Americans were beginning to become active in both major political parties in the
United States. However, during the 2000 campaign, candidates already were distanc-
ing themselves from campaign contributions from Muslim and Arab organizations.
Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity

Kenneth J. Guest and Peter Kwong

Since the publication of Portes and Bach's *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* in 1985, the concept of the ethnic enclave has caught the imagination of the scholarly community. As immigration to the United States has increased in recent years, scholars have begun to apply the theory of ethnic enclaves to their own studies of immigrant communities. Beyond the academy the term has been applied to address almost any form of immigrant ethnic concentration whether or not it fits within the original formulation. In the political arena, as debates intensify over the merits of affirmative action programs for colored minorities, the concept of ethnic enclaves has introduced an alternative way to examine the incorporation of new U.S. immigrants—those who are mainly from Asia and Latin America. And in an era of increasing ethnic identity and pride, Portes and Bach's assertion of ethnic cohesion in the ethnic enclave is extremely appealing to a wide audience. Although their empirical data are narrowly based on a unique Cuban immigrant community in Miami, their notion of ethnic enclaves has provided a powerful theoretical framework for reconceptualizing existing ways of looking at: (1) class, mobility, and incorporation issues within immigrant communities, and (2) ethnic, race, and immigrant relations in the United States.

This chapter aims to review the fundamental concepts of Portes and Bach's original research in the Cuban immigrant community in Miami, to examine how the theory of ethnic enclaves has been applied to other U.S. ethnic concentrations, and to critique both its theoretical formulation and its application by drawing upon research conducted in New York's Chinatown. Finally we explore the possibility that the popularity of Portes and Bach's study may have as much to do with the political climate of our time as with the merits of their research.

**Ethnic Enclave: Defining the Concept**

In *Latin Journey* Portes and Bach record a case study of a new ethnic formation in the Cuban community in Miami, a formation they call an "ethnic enclave." The history of Miami, since the 1950s, is a history of successive waves of immigration and the resulting impact on Miami politics, culture, and economics. The 1959 Cuban Revolution brought entire groups of privileged Cubans to Miami, fleeing the collectivization and nationalization under way in Castro's Cuba. A later wave of poorer refugees arrived in the 1980 Mariel boatlift (Portes and Stepick 1993; Card 1990; Portes and Manning 1986).

Portes and Bach argue that the success of Miami's Cuban immigrants derives from the successful establishment of an ethnic enclave. Portes' notion of an ethnic enclave dates from his earlier work and focuses on the advantages available to communities of immigrants who utilize human cultural capital (Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes 1981). Portes originally defines the enclave as containing immigrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organize a variety of enterprises serving their own ethnic market and/or the general
population. Their basic characteristic is that a significant proportion of the immigrant labor force works in enterprises owned by other immigrants (Portes and Bach 1981:291).

In further developing the concept in *Latin Journey*, Portes and Bach (1985:203) argue that the two most essential and influential characteristics of enclaves are: (1) the presence of immigrants with sufficient capital, either brought from abroad or accumulated in the United States, to create new opportunities for economic growth; and (2) an extensive division of labor.

Portes and Bach suggest that this formulation usually occurs through two successive waves of immigration of the same group. First an entrepreneurial class is successfully transplanted from home to receiving country. This class grows. Its economic activities expand and diversify. When the second wave of immigrants arrives the entrepreneurial class can offer them opportunities virtually unavailable to immigrants entering other labor market sectors.

Most scholars have long accepted the concept of “dual labor markets.” In this formulation the primary labor market operates in the monopolistic industries where workers’ jobs are highly paid and secure. The secondary market is lodged largely in small competitive businesses, where jobs are low-paid and insecure. Most immigrants and colored minorities tend to fall into the second option.

Portes and Bach’s articulation of the ethnic enclave points to a possible third alternative. The enclave’s economic structure, they argue, enables immigrants to achieve upward social mobility. Using culturally based social networks, language, common history, and traditions, immigrants are able to find better-paying jobs, more promotion opportunity, and greater ability to use education and skills in the ethnic enclave than they are in the “dead-end jobs” of the secondary labor market of the dominant economic structures.

Despite low wages in the enclave, workers stay in subordinate jobs in order to take advantage of “paths of mobility unavailable in the outside” (Portes and Bach 1985:204). In Portes and Bach’s scenario, as immigrant firms expand, so do openings for co-ethnics at the supervisory and managerial level as well as opportunities for ownership and self-employment. In this model the prosperity of the community is built on close-knit family and kinship networks, where both enclave entrepreneurs and workers are bound by and benefit from ethnic solidarity – mutual obligations, trust, and loyalty – which constitutes a form of social capital absent beyond the enclave boundaries. Portes and Bach portray the Cuban enclave as a favorable alternative to the secondary labor market for new immigrants.

**A New Immigrant Narrative**

Urban ethnic neighborhoods are not new. European immigrants came to service America’s first great industrial expansion after the Civil War. They were recruited to work in large industrial complexes in concentrated urban areas, and they worked alongside native-born Americans. The immigrant ghettos they initially settled were transitional way stations, necessary only until they adjusted to the new society and learned English. The pressures of economic survival invariably forced them to move on – to whatever work was available. Eventually, they found homes outside the ghetto, learned English, and integrated into American society (Sowell 1981).

In presenting the ethnic enclave Portes and Bach are offering a very different immigrant narrative than those of the past. Instead of seeing immigrant concentrations as a place of transition – a place to move away from in order to get better jobs and opportunities – they are suggesting a new and extremely optimistic possibility for the incorporation of new immigrants into the U.S. economy. Cubans in the Miami enclave have jobs in the enclave itself. These
jobs, suggest Portes and Bach, are in fact better-paying jobs than those available outside in the secondary labor market. And because they are within the Cuban enclave, lack of English language skills is not a barrier to employment. Moreover, they suggest, within the Cuban enclave there is a shared ethnic spirit of solidarity between workers and employers—a sense of helping each other to help themselves. Cuban employers are able to retain motivated workers who are willing to work hard in order to have the opportunity to learn the trade themselves and advance within the firm as foremen and supervisors. Eventually they hope to utilize ethnic connections within the enclave to open up their own business and become self-employed. In this narrative Cubans can move from the status of humble immigrants without skills or capital to achieve self-employment and ownership inside the enclave, and accomplish this within one generation.

The notion of the ethnic enclave turns the traditional “human resources” argument upside down. Human resource theory suggests that new immigrants must start from the bottom and move up the ladder of mobility. It takes time to learn English well enough to get a better job. It takes even longer to learn the skills to be a better-paid worker. Immigrants must leave their enclave to find work because within immigrant communities there are few businesses well-off enough to provide immigrants with jobs. This narrative was prevalent among earlier European immigrants. An Italian immigrant stayed in New York’s Little Italy neighborhood just long enough to learn a few words of English in order to get a job in a Brooklyn factory. For a better job he would have to improve his English and acquire additional skills to go elsewhere to work, perhaps in Detroit's automobile industry. This Italian immigrant's mobility would most likely be limited to moving from unskilled to highly skilled union jobs. Dreams of ownership and self-employment would most likely be deferred and realized through the ambition of his offspring. The ethnic enclave as described by Portes and Bach suggests the possibility of an entirely new narrative for today's new immigrants and provides a framework for reconceptualizing notions of class, mobility, and assimilation within immigrant communities. Today's immigrants can find jobs within the enclave. They can learn skills and receive on-the-job training in the enclave. They may even be able to move up the ladder to self-employment without ever leaving the enclave. If true, this is indeed a new trajectory (see also Bailey and Waldinger 1991).

Applications of the Ethnic Enclave Model

The concept of the ethnic enclave is hard to generalize, as even Portes and Bach (1983:38) admit. In describing the Cuban enclave, they lay out several defining characteristics. The ethnic enclave is not an ethnic neighborhood. It is primarily focused on ethnic economic activity. The enclave has an entrepreneurial class possessing the capital necessary for the establishment of ethnic businesses. It also has a diversity of employment arising from the growth of ethnic businesses, which in turn offers opportunities for upward mobility both to supervisory and management positions and even to ownership and self-employment.

These are very difficult conditions to fulfill. First, immigrants with professional and entrepreneurial skills, especially those with individual capital, have a larger degree of mobility in the mainstream American economy. They are often not willing to be stranded in an immigrant enclave to work and perhaps live alongside the poor and unskilled. Second, to maintain the diversity of job opportunities that will allow participants in the ethnic enclave to achieve ownership and self-employment, firms cannot grow too large. In small communities, monopolies in any particular sector would severely inhibit options for ownership and self-employment. Yet this scenario—in which immigrants with capital
and entrepreneurial skills start businesses large enough to hire workers but not too large to monopolize the enclave—seems extremely rare.

Perhaps there are very few immigrant communities which would satisfy the criteria. In *Latin Journey*, Portes and Bach detail only two other examples, the Japanese and Jewish immigrant communities arriving in the United States during the 1890–1914 period. Both were noted for their tightly knit communities that were not exclusively residential.

They were instead economic enclaves, areas where a substantial proportion of immigrants were engaged in business activities and where a still larger proportion worked in firms owned by other immigrants. For the entrepreneurially inclined, networks based on ethnic solidarity had clear economic potential. The community was (1) a source of labor, which could be made to work at lower wages; (2) a controlled market; and (3) a source of capital, through rotating credit associations and similar institutions (Portes and Bach 1985:38).

Using these parameters, can the ethnic enclave model detailed by Portes and Bach in the Cuban community in Miami be generalized to other immigrant communities? A number of scholars have tested the applicability of the ethnic enclave formulation. Their studies have produced mixed results.

Gilbertson and Gurak (1993) apply the concept of the ethnic enclave to the labor market experiences of Dominican and Colombian men in New York City utilizing data from a survey conducted in 1981. They do not find the positive returns suggested by Portes and Bach. Concerned that previous research on the enclave has focused too narrowly on wages, Gilbertson and Gurak expand their study to compare primary, secondary, and enclave workers not only on wages but also on opportunities for skill acquisition and access to non-monetary fringe benefits. Unlike the findings in Miami, Gilbertson and Gurak’s analysis reveals no significant differences in opportunities for skill acquisition or earnings return between enclave and secondary market workers. In fact they argue that in receipt of health insurance and retirement benefits, increasingly expensive items in today’s economy, Dominican and Colombian men in the enclave are disadvantaged compared with secondary sector workers. “Our findings are not harmonious with the hypothesis that the enclave economy is a protected sector of the U.S. economy” (Gilbertson and Gurak 1993:218).

In a separate analysis of the same data, Gilbertson (1993) examines Dominican and Colombian women’s enclave labor in New York City. Her analysis shows that women working in Hispanic-owned firms do not receive advantages in earnings returns to human capital when compared to women in other labor market sectors. She concludes that ethnic ties do not produce positive advantages for women workers and that ethnic enclave employment, in fact, is highly exploitative of women. Finally Gilbertson suggests that the successes of certain sectors within the ethnic enclave rely heavily upon the marginal position of immigrant women.

In attempting to apply Portes and Bach’s concept of the ethnic enclave to the Dominican and Colombian experience in New York City, Gilbertson and Gurak encounter a problem of definition and methodology. They cite Portes and Bach’s definition of an enclave as “firms of any size which are owned and managed by members of an identifiable cultural or national minority.” As a result their study encompasses firms in a large decentralized area including much of upper Manhattan and all of Queens. Is this really an ethnic enclave? Furthermore, their survey structure identified respondents working for any Hispanic, whereas an enclave is ideally defined in terms of working for someone of the same country of origin. Respondents may have been working in a business with a Hispanic manager but with a non-Hispanic owner. These complications in definition and methodology exemplify the difficulty in applying the ethnic enclave model beyond the Cuban experience in Miami.
Min Zhou and John Logan (1989), later expanded in Zhou (1992), attempt to apply the ethnic enclave concept to New York’s Chinatown. They define and analyze the enclave in three ways, examining place of residence, place of work, and industrial classification. They conduct a separate analysis of the labor market situation of immigrant women. Yet even in a study conducted in New York’s Chinatown with its many similarities to Miami and conducted by a student of Portes, the findings produce mixed results. Zhou and Logan suggest that for Chinese immigrant men, labor market experience, education, and English language ability, or human capital, do have positive effects on wage earnings within the enclave. However, they find that “human capital returns for men are not greater within the enclave than outside” (1989:819).

Zhou and Logan’s analysis of women’s experiences within the enclave further weakens the ethnic enclave hypothesis. Despite the increased importance of women in the Chinatown enclave economy, both as consumers and workers (primarily in the garment industry), Zhou and Logan found that the key predictors of women’s earnings were hours logged and occupation, not human capital. They found a total absence of human capital effects and no measurable earnings returns on previous human capital. Why? Zhou and Logan identify certain status-based obstacles for women working within the enclave, including occupational segregation by gender, women forced to play triple roles as mother, wife, and worker, and jobs requiring higher education consistently reserved for men. They conclude that Chinese cultural notions of male supremacy reinforce gender discrimination in the enclave. The authors suggest that further research must be conducted to determine “to what degree the positive functions of the enclave for men are derived from the subordinate position of women” (Zhou and Logan 1989:818).

Though the quantitative findings for the success of the Chinese ethnic enclave are mixed in the 1989 study, in her book *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (1992) Min Zhou relies heavily on cultural explanations to make the case for the positive returns of participating in the enclave economy. Following Portes and Bach’s notion of ethnic solidarity, Zhou (1992:14) argues that in Chinatown the “economic behavior of enclave participants is not purely self interested, nor is it based on strict calculation in dollars.” The enclave benefits entrepreneurs who receive profits in large part from the low-wage labor, but in return also incur obligations to the workers. The enclave benefits the workers, who while “willingly exploited” are given opportunities for training in occupational skills which may improve future employment. Chinese immigrant laborers are willing to work for substandard wages, a fact Zhou attributes directly to three factors: a Chinese cultural work ethic, a positive comparison to poorer wages in China, and a willingness to make sacrifices in the short term in order to derive benefits in the future. In the case of Chinese women in the enclave, Zhou argues “their behavior must be understood in the context of Chinese culture which gives priority not to individual achievement but to the welfare of the family and the community as a whole.” Zhou concludes that what women lose for themselves becomes a significant contribution to the family. Unfortunately her argument is weakened by the mixed results of her own research, noted earlier.

Other studies of U.S. Chinatowns have challenged Portes and Bach’s view of the ethnic enclave as a protected sector for immigrant workers with ethnic solidarity enabling positive wage returns on human capital and opportunities for upward mobility. Sanders and Nee (1987), examining census data for San Francisco’s Chinatown and Miami’s Cuban enclave, have compared the wage levels of those working in the enclaves with those in the secondary labor market and concluded that in fact employment in the ethnic enclaves pays immigrant workers less than employment in the non-ethnic labor market. While acknowledg-
edging that the ethnic enclave confers certain advantages upon ethnic entrepre-
neurs Sanders and Nee assign these advantages to ethnic entrepreneurs’ ability
within the enclave to exploit workers, and to draw on ethnic solidarity and
notions of mutual obligation to enforce and maintain sweatshop conditions,
including low wages and closure to union organizing. Sanders and Nee ques-
tion the empirical evidence for the claims of ethnic solidarity at work in the
ethnic enclave. They suggest that patterns of exchange between bosses and
workers will need to receive further detailed analysis before positive effects of
ethnic solidarity upon the socioeconomic mobility of immigrant workers can be
verified.

Like Sanders and Nee, Don Mar’s research in San Francisco’s Chinatown
(1991) reveals that, contrary to Portes and Bach’s positive findings, workers
in the Chinese ethnic enclave have “lower wages, higher turnover and less
promotional opportunities than workers in other labor market segments”.
(1991:17). While Mar notes the positive advantage of the enclave providing
higher employment levels than the secondary market and serving as a haven for
ethnics during U.S. economic downturns, he suggests that enclaves are not a
source of increased mobility or a locale for developing ethnic entrepreneurs. To
become an entrepreneur, argues Mar, the immigrant requires capital. This is
usually accumulated prior to arrival in the United States or through family net-
works, not as a result of employment in the ethnic enclave. Mar criticizes Portes
and Bach’s assertion that earnings in the ethnic economy are tied to human
capital by suggesting that immigrants with high levels of human capital endow-
ments would be those most likely also to possess high levels of capital accu-
mulation leading to self-employment in the United States. Mar also suggests
levels of mobility to self-employment may not be so high when the significant
flow of immigrants out of self-employment back into wage labor is taken into
account.

Grenier’s research in Miami points to a problem in Portes and Bach’s research
itself. Grenier claims that in their calculations they have underestimated the
percentage of workers in their population samples (Grenier, 1992:137–138, 154).
Moreover, he claims that contrary to the image Portes and Bach portray of a
middle-class Cuban enclave awash in ethnic solidarity, most participants are not
successful entrepreneurs. Rather, they are working-class people, with working-
class interests, who are active in the labor movement.

Wilson and Martin (1982) use census data and inferred input–output differen-
tials to compare the Cuban and black enclave economies in Miami and
attempt “to explain the success of the few prosperous ethnic business commu-
nities in contrast to the marginality of other minority business communities.”
They posit that enclaves achieve relative advantage based on their internal eco-
monic structure. Successful enclaves like the Cuban one attain a high level of
internal vertical and horizontal integration, reproducing crucial economic fea-
tures of the central “majority” economy, yet with a great degree of autonomy
from that economy. Less successful enclaves, like the black enclave in Miami
fail to achieve the same levels of vertical and horizontal interdependencies and
instead appear to be merely an extension of the periphery economy.

How did this difference in economic structure develop? Here Wilson and
Martin return to historical, cultural, and sociological factors to seek explana-
tion. In particular they point to the unique location of the Spanish-speaking
business population in the Cuban enclave during a time of increasing global
trade, transportation, and communication with Latin America and the
Caribbean. They also cite greater entrepreneurial experience among Cuban
immigrants and greater access to capital. The black community, Wilson and
Martin note, lacks investment capital and an exploitable labor force. Most black labor is exported to white businesses and many highly trained blacks—are potential entrepreneurs—prefer working with government agencies. Wilson and Martin conclude that the conditions for the success of the Cuban enclave are unique and are not present in the black community.

We believe that comparing the Cuban and the black enclaves is an extremely problematic and potentially dangerous application. In so doing Wilson and Martin take a framework designed for understanding immigrant experience in the United States and apply it to an established U.S. ethnic community. Blacks are not new immigrants. And as Wilson and Martin state, none of the prerequisites Portes and Bach establish for a successful ethnic enclave exist in the black community in Miami. Perhaps most importantly, blacks do not play the same role in the deindustrialized and restructured U.S. economy that new immigrants play. Seeking increased profits, American businesses have decentralized industrial production and relocated production sites to areas with the least governmental regulation, the lowest labor costs, the weakest labor organizations, and the most vulnerable workers. In many cases this has meant shifting production offshore to the Caribbean, Central America, and the Pacific Rim. In other cases it has meant locating production sites in U.S. immigrant communities. New immigrants fill this labor market, not poor blacks or poor whites. The danger of this application, which Wilson and Martin avoid, is in establishing a comparison between two ethnic communities which on the surface may have many similarities yet differ significantly in historical and social context.

It is our opinion that in evaluating the scholarly debates on the issue, the validity of Portes and Bach's claims proves to be elusive. In part this has to do with the problem of defining the parameters of ethnic enclaves and the difficulties in establishing a fixed list of quantitative data to use for comparative purposes. In part, we conclude, this stems from the fact that much of their observed reality involved political factors which they have underrated and which are impossible to verify relying purely on quantitative economic data. While we agree that the ethnic enclave phenomenon exists in some immigrant communities, we seriously disagree with many of the positive attributes assigned to it, particularly claims of increased upward mobility and ethnic solidarity.

**New York Chinatown: A Case Study**

The experience of the Miami Cuban immigrant enclave appears to be an extremely rare occurrence. In examining New York's Chinatown in light of the ethnic enclave concept, however, we believe we have found a solid case for comparison. A number of key similarities will allow comparison and evaluation of Portes and Bach's claims. First, Chinatown too is an intensely concentrated ethnic phenomenon with a multi-class composition of largely non-English-speaking new immigrants. And while Chinatown has existed for nearly a century, in the early 1970s it took on many of the ethnic enclave attributes, as Asian "refugee capitalists" immigrating to New York to avoid political instability were later joined by thousands of working-class refugees affected by China's Cultural Revolution coming through Hong Kong. Thus Portes and Bach's two fundamental characteristics of an enclave, namely an entrepreneurial business class with capital to invest and diversity in the labor market, were achieved in Chinatown during the course of the 1970s and continued to build in the 1980s and 1990s as additional capital came from Hong Kong and new workers came from mainland China, particularly undocumented workers from Fujian Province (Kwong 1997). But do Portes and Bach's claims of ethnic solidarity leading to greater return on human capital and increased upward mobility within the enclave hold up in the Chinatown case?
Our research in New York’s Chinatown, drawing upon many years of extensive participatory observation and hundreds of in-depth interviews, suggests a very different conclusion from Portes and Bach’s claims about ethnic enclaves. In particular, our study documents that within the Chinese immigrant community, while ethnic support and mutual assistance exist, those who have wealth, education, and who immigrated earlier have accelerated their capital accumulation and established a dominant position in the community by exploiting less fortunate co-ethnic newcomers. This process has reached a new extreme with the recent influx of illegal immigrants from mainland China. Our analysis suggests that the economic dynamics of the ethnic enclave give rise to a particular strategy for accumulation, not a cultural proclivity for mutual aid. Furthermore, we argue that “ethnic solidarity” has increasingly been manufactured by the economic elite within the Chinese community to gain better control over their co-ethnic employees.

As stated earlier, urban ethnic neighborhoods are not new in the United States. At the turn of the 20th century they served as transitional orientation points where newly arrived European immigrants adjusted to their new environment before moving into mainstream American society (Sowell 1981). From the beginning, however, Chinatowns were different. The Chinese Labor Exclusion Act of 1882 barred immigration of Chinese workers into the United States. Anti-Chinese violence, blatant discrimination, and legislated housing restrictions forced those Chinese already in America into segregated neighborhoods. The exclusion of Chinese workers from jobs in the mainstream American labor market for almost a century further maintained the segregation (Kwong 1979).

With the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Chinatowns and other newer ethnic immigrant neighborhoods across the nation no longer owed their existence to legally sanctioned racial exclusion. One could therefore expect that they would finally play the role of transitional neighborhoods, like the old European ghettos. Instead, many of these new districts, like the Cuban community in Miami and New York’s Chinatown, have developed viable economic structures providing new immigrants with jobs right in the midst of their own ethnic immigrant communities.

Until 1965, most U.S. Chinatowns were largely bachelor societies whose residents engaged in low paying self-employed trades. Families and wives of residents, taking advantage of liberalized immigration policies, began to arrive under the “family unification” provision of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. This influx added a substantial number of women to the labor force, which the garment industry quickly incorporated by subcontracting work to Chinatown garment factory operators. For the garment industry the Chinese situation was ideal. Not only had it solved its labor force problem but garment manufacturers could leave factory management to Chinese contractors, who handled the language problem, worked out wage scales, and even dealt with the union. By the early 1980s, there were already 400 garment factories in New York’s Chinatown, employing 20,000 workers.

The rise of the garment industry in the immigrant Chinese community stimulated the growth of Chinese restaurants and other service trades, leading to a local economic boom and providing new job opportunities. These in turn attracted more Chinese immigrant workers and more Hong Kong investment. With additional labor and capital, Chinatown’s economy expanded both vertically and horizontally, adding more restaurants and service businesses while diversifying into wholesale food distribution, restaurant equipment, and the construction trades. This rapid growth also spawned new satellite Chinese communities in New York City’s other boroughs. By the early 1980s Chinese ethnic enclaves had become thriving, predominantly working-class economic entities inhabited by non-English-speaking immigrants (Kwong 1987).
The Fuzhounese

Since the 1980s New York’s Chinatown has received a large and persistent influx of illegal immigrants from mainland China (Kwong 1996; Kwong 1997a). Most of them are from the rural outskirts of the city of Fuzhou in the southeastern province of Fujian. In comparison to estimates of all illegal immigrants currently in the United States (conservatively 5 million: and over 60 percent are Mexicans and Central Americans), the number of Fuzhounese is comparatively small, approximately 200,000. But the Fuzhounese situation is unique. Many of them are victims of a large-scale and sophisticated international human smuggling network. After arrival, they may work for years under what amounts to indentured servitude to pay off large “transportation” debts, now more than $50,000 per person. Smugglers, called “snakeheads,” enforce compliance in both work and repayment with constant threats of torture, rape, and kidnapping. Employers brutally exploit these vulnerable undocumented workers while brazenly violating American labor laws.

The original Chinatown in Lower Manhattan and the newer enclave in Sunset Park in Brooklyn (established since the late 1980s) are very attractive to the arriving immigrants. There they are able to locate jobs quickly after landing in the United States without ever having to learn English. Chinese employers can count on the service of this cheap labor supply, because these immigrant workers (without English and professional skills) have problems finding jobs in the open, but competitive, low-wage secondary labor markets outside of Chinatown.

While it is easy for a new immigrant to settle within the Chinese enclave initially, our study calls into question the long-term benefits. Regarding language acquisition, for example, once settled there, immigrants are not likely to learn English, since it is unnecessary in the daily activities and social interactions in the enclave. This is not to say that the immigrants lack desire to learn the language. Several different versions of English Made Easy audio cassette tapes are available in Chinese bookstores, as are bilingual microcomputers. Thousands of Chinese immigrants attend English language classes offered weekly by dozens of non-profit groups including unions, churches, and social service organizations in the community. But spending two hours in a language class on Sunday, without a chance to converse and practice until a week later, produces meager results. It is common to meet Chinatown residents who, having lived in the United States for more than 25 years, are not able to communicate in simple English. This language barrier, combined with a shortage of jobs outside the enclave, limits the possibilities for Chinese immigrants to escape the ethnic immigrant community. They remain trapped and vulnerable to the power of Chinese employers.

Furthermore, our study suggests that the very existence of ethnic enclaves like Chinatown inhibits new immigrants from seeking other options. The possibilities available to undocumented workers recently arrived from Fuzhou are the most limited. This can be extremely advantageous to Chinese employers. Ethnic workers with little or no access to the primary or secondary labor markets, especially undocumented workers, are more vulnerable to labor exploitation. In this context it may be in the employers’ interest to promote an ideology of ethnic solidarity to reinforce Chinese dependency on the ethnic enclaves.

We are all Chinese: manufacturing ethnic solidarity

From the moment Chinese immigrants arrive, they rely on ethnic networks to survive. The newcomers rely on their relatives or friends to get them housing and jobs. They need them also for the very practical purpose of learning how to do the work. With many working 12 hours a day, often for well below minimum wage, no one except a close friend or a relative would take time to teach a newcomer how to sew, how to set tables, or how to drive nails.
The owners in our study prefer not to get involved in the recruitment and training process. Instead, they allow long-time employees to recruit workers through ethnic and kinship networks. From the employer's perspective this helps screen out undesirable candidates. It also immediately places newcomers into a system of social obligations. The friend performs a ren-qing (personal favor) by means of guanxi (connections) to get the newcomer a job. The newcomer then owes a ren-qing not only to the friend but more importantly, to the employer. The job could have gone to any one of many applicants. But the employer has shown his good-heartedness by helping a fellow Chinese, often a fellow villager, and perhaps even taking the risk of hiring an illegal. The newcomer is expected to return these favors when he or she is in a position to do so. This begins by being a compliant, hard worker. Respectful and loyal behavior, in return, ensures special consideration in individual job assignment, work load, wages, and benefits. Thus Chinese cultural notions of ren-qing transform a typical labor/capital class relationship into an association based on personal favor and obligation.

Employers effectively manipulate ideas of ethnic solidarity to inspire worker loyalty. For instance, they may attempt to create work environments that are culturally familiar by disregarding fundamental American rules. Mothers are allowed to leave work at four in the afternoon to pick up their children at school and bring them back to the factory. If the family is in financial distress, which all debt-paying illegals are, the owners may “help out” by hiring their children to work in the factory or allowing them to bring consignments home, even though such practices violate U.S. labor laws. Lonely old ladies with little to do are allowed to work as thread cutters on completed garments. Older men wash dishes for a few dollars so they can feel useful and have others to talk with during the day. Our analysis reveals that employers’ generosity toward employees and solidarity with their co-ethnics in effect mask a system of co-ethnic exploitation (Kwong 1997b).

*Employers’ political power*

In addition to their economic control over the enclave, Kwong’s earlier studies (1987, 1997a) indicate that Chinatown employers also dominate all social organizations within the Chinese community through a system which has evolved over more than a century. When Chinese in the United States were forced into segregated communities in the 1880s the political structure that emerged as the self-policing force of these communities was transplanted from the rural regions of China. In fact, it closely followed the pattern of local, unofficial civic organization that sprang up during the Qing dynasty. Since Chinese communities in America remained in relative isolation until the 1960s, the imported structure had a long time to develop and solidify. It is still operative today, despite the profound changes of recent years.

Early Chinese immigrants, the vast majority of whom were male, tended to live communally, sharing apartments to save money. This arrangement evolved into a formal collective called a fong, which literally means a “room.” Members of a fong developed a close relationship and great loyalty to one another.

Several fongs made up of people from the same village formed a village association; several fongs composed of people of the same surname formed family or surname associations. A village association might raise funds for famine relief or for the building of schools and hospitals in their particular home village. But the associations also carried out joint functions and lent support to each other. Successful collective action led to the creation of even larger organizations. Hui guan (meeting halls) were composed of several family and village association groups together. While the hui guan continued to carry out mutual aid and charity functions, they were more commercially oriented than the fongs or asso-
associations. They arbitrated disputes among members and served as credit and employment agencies. They also ensured their members' obligations in business transactions with others.

The associations were originally formed to defend their members against a hostile American society and to provide order within the community. But an internal hierarchy soon developed. Association members who owned shops and restaurants commanded the respect of other members, who depended on them for jobs. Those who received jobs and favors became obligated, forming patron/client relationships. The patrons thus became association leaders in addition to owning businesses. The resulting hierarchy that developed within the Chinese community was based entirely on wealth. And wealthy Chinatown shopowners and merchants were able to use the associations to maintain social and political control of the community (Kuo 1977).

Our most recent research suggests that Chinatown's class-based political structure remains fundamentally unchanged. Local power continues to be concentrated in the hands of factory owners, merchants, and landlords, who utilize their official positions in the associations to achieve personal political goals. When association leaders gather, they effectively make up an informal government, though one solely representing the interests of the Chinatown elite. Kinship, village ties, trade, and fraternities may cut vertically across the Chinatown community, superseding class lines. The political structure, however, does not. Political power is concentrated exclusively in the hands of the wealthy.

An examination of political relationships with outside government and non-government entities reveals the way the nearly hegemonic control of power in Chinatown is reinforced. The merchant elite are recognized as the "community leaders" by those beyond the enclave who have no idea how to penetrate this isolated community, and often little interest in trying. In recent cases, whenever the mayor's office, a federal government official, or law enforcement authorities seek to reach out to the Chinese community, they do so through the Chinatown elite. Control over access to political networks beyond Chinatown completes the elite's monopoly of the political, economic, and social structure of Chinatown.

Aspects of a successful enclave?

In some instances positive aspects which Portes and Bach identify in the Miami enclave have been experienced in New York's Chinatown. At least in the 1970s at the beginning of the mass Chinese migration, entrepreneurs found substantial opportunities in the restaurant and garment trades. At that formative stage, workers had some potential for moving into management and ownership positions. Our study points out, however, that this "wild-west frontier" environment disappeared quickly as more and more immigrants poured in from Hong Kong and mainland China. Employers took advantage of the surplus labor by offering increasingly lower rewards to their co-ethnic employees. Workers who could not learn enough English remained constrained within the enclave, unable to exit into the mainstream American labor markets. Standards continued to deteriorate as the waves of undocumented Fuzhou Chinese immigrants entered the competition for jobs in the 1980s and 1990s. The potential for upward mobility within the enclave economy reported by Portes and Bach in Little Havana, quickly ended in New York's Chinatown.

Conclusion

Portes and Bach are correct in identifying the importance of the ethnic enclave phenomenon, especially in situations in which new immigrants, mostly from Asia and Latin America, tend not to disperse but reside and work in ethnically con-
centrated locations. Unlike the ghettos of earlier European immigrant communities, today ethnic enclaves exist which are not transitional. They have capital flowing in to employ new immigrants and they have a multi-class character. Though we disagree with many of the implications of Portes and Bach's study, we believe their introduction of the concept of "ethnic enclave" has made an important contribution by intensifying the debate regarding new forms of immigrant incorporation and related socioeconomic, political, and racial issues.

The concept of the ethnic enclave, however, is not easily generalizable. The specific phenomenon of "Little Havana" in Miami described by Portes and Bach involves an ethnically concentrated, multi-class, and more or less self-sufficient community. This is highly unusual. In most instances of immigrant enclaves today, immigrant workers still reside in ghettos as a transitional place until they locate better jobs in the secondary or primary economy. Entrepreneurs and professionals tend to seek mobility in mainstream society, not in the enclave. For the different classes of Cuban immigrants — elites, small entrepreneurs, middle-class professionals, and working people — to remain together in one enclave in Miami is rare. Given their particular political and immigration history it may even be unique. If so, the characteristics and attributes Portes and Bach ascribe to the ethnic enclave concept may also be unique to Miami. This possibility must be considered.

Our Chinatown study certainly does not support their positive claims for the role of the enclave in the immigrant incorporation process, despite examining a phenomenon perhaps closest to Portes and Bach's Cuban ethnic enclave. Nor do other studies we have reviewed. Claims that workers in the enclaves receive higher pay than those in the secondary labor market and claims of greater opportunity for upward mobility to "self-ownership" are particularly difficult to corroborate.

Key problems exist in Portes and Bach's research data itself, as noted earlier (Grenier 1992). Further problems emerge from their methodology. Their conception of the ethnic enclave — a complex group of people moving and changing into different roles over time — is too broadly conceived. To confirm their observations quantitatively requires an agreement on specific parameters of the study. Whose incomes are to be counted? Must all those considered in the study reside in the enclave? How do you correctly account for mobility over time? How do you compare the conditions inside the enclave to those in the general labor markets? Which part of the general labor market should be used in the comparison? It seems that part of the difficulty of confirming Portes and Bach's claims is that we are comparing apples and oranges. This problem confronts all studies inspired by their ethnic enclave conception.

Ultimately, we believe that Portes and Bach's analysis significantly overestimates the strength of ethnic solidarity and underestimates the existence of co-ethnic exploitation. Furthermore, Portes and Bach consistently underestimate the political power relationships within the enclaves. Ethnic employers do use their political power inside these isolated ethnic communities to their advantage. Our fieldwork in the Chinese community presents a clear example of this. Despite significant scholarly debate on the issue and numerous attempts to apply the concept of the ethnic enclave beyond the Miami case study, the evidence in support of the general applicability of the ethnic enclave model remains inconclusive.

The ethnic enclave and cultural diversity

Reservations and criticisms of their optimistic claims notwithstanding, Portes and Bach's theory of ethnic enclaves is extremely popular. Why? In the final analysis,
we suggest the popularity of their study may have more to do with the political climate of our time than the applicability of their research findings. Their claims of ethnic solidarity and ethnic self-reliance are appealing to those new immigrant groups attempting to carve a niche for themselves in the American landscape and who want to distance themselves from what they see as the failures of the traditional colored minorities. In this new narrative, immigrants can count on ethnic solidarity and mutual assistance to succeed without help from the mainstream society. They can develop their own systems of upward mobility in the American economy. And they can accomplish this without "forced assimilation" — without sacrificing their language, culture, and ethnic community.

Claims of ethnic solidarity and ethnic self-reliance have also captured the imagination of those who are frustrated by the lack of economic progress in the ghettos of American communities. If new immigrants can achieve economic success in this manner, why not the African American community? If the ethnic enclave model works, it provides an alternative for evaluating the status of traditional U.S. minorities, especially the African American community, and the lack of progress by the civil rights movement in achieving economic parity. By implication, the success of the immigrant ethnic enclave suggests that African Americans lack a sense of "ethnic solidarity" and "work ethic" as compared to new immigrants. Moreover, if the virtues of the ethnic enclave prove true, and colored immigrants can achieve upward mobility, then African American charges of racism leveled against the U.S. economic system would be undermined.

Here we must be wary of how ideas of ethnic solidarity, designed to further the analysis of immigrant groups in America, may play into other ideological discourses and political agendas. Do the successes of some ethnic groups based on patterns of ethnic solidarity suggest a cultural superiority over other ethnic groups? We argue that the answer must be no. Instead, there are other historical, political, and economic dynamics at work, as suggested in the work of Wilson and Martin (1982). It is important to remember that by and large new immigrants are likely to be better off economically than the most depressed parts of the American population. Today's immigrants, like immigrants of previous generations, tend to be the more personally restless and ambitious elements from their homeland. Additionally, as a result of U.S. immigration preferences, today's immigrants tend to have much stronger family ties, an advantage they have over both blacks and whites in our society. And finally, immigrants from Asia and Latin America, while facing discrimination in the United States as colored minorities, have not suffered the consequences of the intense hostility built up and enacted between blacks and whites through the history of slavery and segregation.

How does the notion of ethnic enclaves engage the discourse about cultural diversity in U.S. society? Portes and Bach attempt to provide insights into a new form of immigrant incorporation into the U.S. economy at a time when immigration is becoming increasingly prominent in academic, policy, and popular discourse. Yet the purported successes and potential of the ethnic enclave may actually provide a misleading framework for exploring and understanding issues of diversity in U.S. society, especially as they play out between traditional racial/ethnic groups and new immigrant communities. Furthermore, the notion of ethnic solidarity may also obscure the complexities, conflicts, diversity, and contradictions within individual immigrant communities.
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Rebellion or Revolution? I

Harold Cruse

For the first time since the 1930's Americans of more than ordinary social insight are openly discussing the possibility of social revolution in the United States. We know that during the 1930's "revolution" implied the overthrow of capitalistic institutions—a real threat which the more enlightened wing of American bourgeois wealth successfully defeated by the implementation of the various New Deal policies. But unlike the 1930's, when it was reported that some of the idle rich were so fearful of revolution that they had their yachts readied in the harbor for a fast getaway just in case, the talk of revolution today has little to do with conflicts in labor-capital relations or the imminent collapse of the capitalist system. It has to do with the present state of American race relations which some people (hopefully or fearfully) describe as the "Negro revolution."

There is no need to mention the obvious—that the racial crisis reflects broad and profound discontent within the American Negro minority. However, when one goes so far as to say that this racial discontent contains the seeds of social revolution in America, this immediately calls up a flock of other questions concerning the present outlook of the American state of mind which, when considered side by side with the possibility of a Negro revolution, has a very sobering, if not disturbing, effect on such speculations. Without a doubt it must have been the influence of such considerations which prompted President Kennedy to counsel, some time ago, apropos of the racial question, that the revolution be a peaceful one.

Considering the social, historical and political background of twentieth-century revolutions thus far, the talk about Negro revolution also demands that all segments of the Negro movement in America be examined very closely. In doing so, we will note that none of the leadership corps of any segment, be it the NAACP-King-CORE students-Urban League-Muslims, etc., is anti-capitalist. The same can generally be said for the followers of these leadership factions. If the Negro movement, then, is revolutionary, it must be revolutionary in a sense which is uniquely different from the characteristics and aims of all other revolutions of our century.

The speculations about the Negro revolution have also inspired the usual suspicions that the integration movement is Communist-inspired. In answer to such charges one could again point to the very conservative and loyal pro-capitalist sentiments of Negro leadership. But still this would not explain very much about the Negro revolution. We know very well that Communists and other Marxist factions, such as Trotskyites, Independent Socialists, etc., are very much in
support of the Negro movement in one way or another. One has only to read the Marxist-oriented press to see this. The truth is, however, that the Marxist factions are trailing very eagerly behind the Negro movement in search of issues for their programs. Marxists are no longer able, as they once were, to initiate any movements among Negroes. Moreover, what is not generally understood by those who raise the issue of Communism is that the integration movement, by its very nature, has rendered the Marxist movement superfluous and irrelevant, since Marxists qua Marxists are not needed in the integration struggle. The character of the integration struggle cuts the ground from under Marxist parties since they cannot beat the NAACP or CORE at their own game, nor can Marxist theories about revolution cope with a Negro movement that is pro-capitalist to the extent of demanding no more than an equitable share of the abundance of capitalist democracy. Yet people express the feeling that there is a revolution in the air. There is tenseness abounding as reports of racial strife become more and more a common occurrence. Instinctively we sense that America is preparing itself for great social changes of some kind and the idea of revolution is the first that comes to mind. But to conjure up the idea of Negro revolution under the present conditions in America also calls for a definition or redefinition of what one means when one says "revolution" or "revolutionary," because in highly industrialized America it is not possible to use such terms as freely as one could in describing social conditions in, let us say, Latin America and still make sense.

People who use the term "Negro revolution" loosely are unwittingly adding fuel to the flames of racial crisis which can lead to more racial chaos instead of racial solutions because such people are not helping to explain exactly what the Negro is up against in his struggle to win racial equality in America. Winning racial equality in America could very well require revolutionary methods, and very probably will; but then we will have to understand why a revolution and how the Negro could possibly make one. The why and the how are important considerations because the racial crisis does lay down an indirect challenge to the American capitalist status quo while the Negro leadership, at the very same time, seeks integration into the status quo with no professed desire to alter it. This creates for the Negro movement a highly contradictory situation which is also a dangerous one. It is dangerous because Americans, of all people in the world today, are the least amenable to, adaptable to, or desirous of any far-reaching changes in their social structures. It is also dangerous because Negro leadership has been instrumental in creating a situation which has implications far beyond its limited range of program. Taken as a whole, Negro leadership does not measure up to the demands of the racial crisis—a crisis which developed because the Negro movement has now transcended the moderate limits established by its leadership.

The Negro movement represents an indirect challenge to the capitalist status quo not because it is programmatically anti-capitalist, but because full integration of the Negro in all levels of American society is not possible within the present framework of the American system. If this sounds categorically absolute one can only say that the time has come for blunt appraisals of reality: The United States cannot and never will solve the race problem unless Americans change the economic, political, cultural, and administrative social organization of this
country in various sectors. Any superoptimism concerning the race question based on a lesser assessment or hope for a neo-liberalistic American revival is heartening but hardly realistic. Is this the same thing as saying that in order to solve the racial crisis what is needed is a revolution? Again the question is: What do we mean by “revolution”?

Social change in any society can be either revolutionary or evolutionary depending on what organizational methods are pursued and who directs the organizational methods. In the United States the capitalist system in all of its major and minor levels of economic administration is owned, controlled, and directed by whites of various classes. Even white labor of the trade union type can be said to have a stake in white ownership of capital either by racial identification with the unions or with a bureaucracy with a capitalist mentality to match its capital investments. Racial discrimination growing out of the racist ideology of the dominant whites of the capital-labor alliance in America has traditionally excluded Negroes (both bourgeois and working-class) from equal participation in either the industrial or trade union fields or administration in the capital-labor alliance. Hence, if the Negro movement is revolutionary or has revolutionary potential, how can the Negro movement have the power in and of itself to enforce structural and administrative changes in this capital-labor combination in order to make room for the democratic participation of the Negro as an American equal? Essentially, this is what is implied in the word “integration” as projected by the Negro bourgeoisie—or at least that portion of the black bourgeoisie that supports integration. But since the integration program does not demand alterations in the structural forms of American society; since the white capital-labor alliance does not desire such changes and would further cement their alliance to block such changes; and since the Negro movement must have such changes in order to achieve its aims—where does this leave the Negro movement? From this analysis—which admittedly is oversimplified for the purpose of illustration—we have to conclude that the Negro movement at this moment is not a revolutionary movement because it has no present means or program to alter the structural forms of American institutions. It is pure political romanticism, at this point, to call the Negro movement the “Negro revolution.” It is more properly called the “Negro rebellion” against the American racial status quo.

There is a great difference between rebellion and revolution—two conceptions which some people insist on confusing. This confusion is what led, for example, to the outcome of the situation in Monroe, North Carolina, involving Robert Williams. The American Marxists of certain tendencies—and Marxists are incurable romantics—tried to make a revolutionary out of Robert Williams, who was not a revolutionary but a rebel. The Monroe movement was but a small, local manifestation of the growing Negro rebellion which some Marxists and others mistook for the revolution in the making. One can say that the final outcome of the adventurous happenings in Monroe was unavoidable due to the tense racial situation in America. Nevertheless, this does not excuse incorrect and superficial assessments applied to the Negro movement in whole or in part. A rebellion is not a revolutionary movement unless it changes the structural arrangements of the society or else is able to project programmatic ideas toward that end. The Negro movement does not have the latter, and in America neither
arms nor demonstrations nor protest marches mean very much without such ideas. The question that follows is: If indeed a revolution is required to achieve Negro aspirations of whatever class stratification in America, how is it possible to change the Negro movement from a rebellion into a revolutionary movement? Again this is predicated on whether or not social changes to come in America will be revolutionary or evolutionary. This has not yet been determined. It is a dialectical question. However, prior to making any rash, or let us say, unscientific predictions, let us get a clearer conception of the American capitalistic status quo and the American Negro's relationship to that status quo.

What all of us Americans, black and white, are facing today is a racial crisis which is composed in part of the accumulated results of white liberal lying and dishonesty about race, caste and class in this country. On the other hand, it is also due to the superficial and intellectually empty racial propaganda projected over the years by Negro middle-class moderation policies on civil rights. The liberal New York Post which has for years been catering to the NAACP and later to Martin Luther King, Jr., was forced to admit, through Stan Opotowsky, one of its reporters, that the class of Negroes that revolted in Birmingham and transformed King's "orderly" protest movement into a race riot had nothing to hope for, no benefits to anticipate from whatever integrated gains King's properly behaved passive protesters would achieve. The liberal New York Post is very late in admitting what many of us voiceless Negroes have been saying for years in criticism of white liberalism that caters to the aims and aspirations of the middle-class Negro. Belatedly the liberals have discovered a class of Negroes in Birmingham which Opotowsky described as "lost men." If these disprivileged Birmingham mavericks are lost then we are all lost—for the Negroes cited by Opotowsky represent the majority of American Negroes. The majority of Negroes cannot be restrained or contained within the legalistic, gradualistic, passive-moderation approach any longer. The civil rights movement has moved from NAACP protest to broad and general rebellion. It is a rebellion which cannot be put down; a rebellion which, if not handled with the highest order of internal statesmanship, will lead to racial and social chaos.

Opotowsky came to the wrong conclusion about Birmingham's "lost men." While it is true that the integration movement offers the majority of Negroes very little, it is far from proving that the majority of Negroes are lost, i.e., lost to social history and eternity. If we are that lost there is nothing left but to join the Muslims or some other like movement for repatriation or separation. On the contrary, what the Negro rebellion is proving in its own as yet inconclusive manner is that the United States, the greatest and most advanced of the capitalist nations in the Western combine, is not at all exempt or immune from the forces of social change that are sweeping the world today. Unhappily, this is a fact which American whites will find most difficult to comprehend. Americans think they are a very special and privileged people as they peer uncomprehendingly beyond their ocean beaches into a world wracked and seething with revolution, discontent, and political turmoil. Americans have been lulled into a deluded fog of complacency by America's ability to maintain long-term stability. This expertly controlled stability is why there is so much perplexity, desperation, fear, and resentment shown by whites all over the country as the Negro protest movement moves into open rebellion. These attitudes are but a reflection of the
uncomfortable fact that America, at present, has no clear answers to the problems emerging out of the racial crisis. President Kennedy voiced this fact right after the Birmingham crisis when he said, "The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand." This is the bitter truth which the NAACP et al. could not admit. For to admit there is no legal remedy for full integration means that the integrationist leadership is out on a limb.

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We American Negroes are not a "lost" ethnic minority in America. We must admit, however, that the very widespread psychology of alienation from American civilization noted among many younger-generation Negroes could lead to the pessimistic conclusion voiced by Muslims and others that there is no hope for black people in white society. Add to this the negative attitudes of most whites, plus the incompetence and obsolescence of liberal remedies, and it is difficult for many not to believe with the Muslims that white civilization is a sinking ship. The flaw for us in the sinking ship forecast is that we are more or less doomed to sink with it. The American Negro, caught in a social situation from which he cannot readily depart, retreat, or easily advance, resembles Jean Paul Sartre's existential man who is "condemned to be free."

The American Negro must stand up and fight his way out of the social trap in which Western civilization has ensnared him. But he can no longer struggle with the old methods alone. Protest actions of whatever nature are no longer enough. The Negro must now develop and begin to use a set of new ideas. What we are up against is the fact that Western civilization is intellectually, spiritually and morally bankrupt. It is a civilization that is no longer able to originate creative ideas in social thinking—and America is no exception to this creative decline that is sapping the vitality of the Western world. In this sense, white America has inherited a racial crisis that it cannot handle and is unable to create a solution for that does not do violence to the collective white American racial ego. The racial crisis in America is more than a question of what Americans are going to do about their subclass of exploited Negro wards. It is also a broader question: which way is America going as a nation, up or down? Beyond that, it is a question of which way is white civilization going? How do white people, Americans included, propose to accommodate themselves to an emerging world of non-white peoples over whom whites no longer have the right of unilateral dispensation? The racial crisis in America is an internal reflection of this contemporary world-wide problem of readjustment between ex-colonial masers and ex-colonial subjects. The so-called "democratic heritage" of the American tradition has served as historical camouflage to hide the fact that America participated in colonialism through its peculiar institution of slavery. Although a very special kind of colonialism, as we shall elaborate later, slavery was an organic offshoot of European subjugation of Africa and the New World. After the Civil War, the Negro was transformed into a semi-colonial people no different from any other semi-colonial people in South Africa or parts of Latin America.

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The historical development of the relationship between the races in America has cultivated a strange and unique pattern of intergroup psychologies between Negro and white of various castes and classes. Many Negroes, especially those who aspire to leadership of one form or another, and the majority of whites have shown a very perverse tendency to overlook or deny exactly what America is as a nation. America never was the all-white nation that the national psychology pretends. America is and always was multi-racial, multi-national, and culturally pluralistic. People who try to deny this fact with talk about Americans all speaking the same language or sharing the same "customs" are merely propagating the myth about "assimilated Americanism." America shares the English language with Canada but they are two nations. The universality of Spanish in South America did not prevent the formation of several independent republics on that continent. If language has failed to break down the racial fences or assimilate the various American ethnic minorities, why cite the American language as proof of an Americanized ideal which America has never achieved? (And let us not mention the Indians.) Either we accept without further delusions that America is pluralistic and democratically adjust our economic, political, cultural, and administrative institutions to fit what is the human living fact and cease believing in the mythology of assimilated Americanism based on the dominant white Protestant Anglo-Saxon ideal, or the racial crisis will be more and more exacerbated. This would be the approach to an evolutionary path for social change in America.

It is possibly too late for this approach. It would require voluntary social planning and governmental intervention into the economy—the great bugbears of the free enterprise economic religion. America has grown up planlessly and chaotically, leaving her racial and ethnic minorities to shift for themselves while she cultivates the idea that America is an all-white Anglo-Saxon nation. This is a totally false image. A psychology, whether individual or national, that tries to deny the essential facts about its social origins is lying to itself and to the world. Such a psychology, individual or national, cannot deal effectively with social reality. America in its national psychology lies to itself that Anglo-Saxon and North European racial ingenuity plus the resources of a virgin continent built American capitalist democracy. America lies to itself that it was always, from the beginning, a democratic nation when its very constitution sanctioned and upheld chattel slavery. Moreover, America conveniently forgets that the first capitalist "free enterprise" banks and stock markets in the land were made possible by accumulated capital accrued from the unpaid labor of Negro slaves. But it would be too much to expect contemporary America to go back over its own history and reassess all these racial facts. Americans are not historically minded and the capitalistic free-enterprise mentality only looks to the future in terms of monetary profits. A program of socially administered evolutionary changes in our economic, political, and cultural life seems very remote. A racial "New Deal" would cause more of an outcry than Roosevelt's reforms, even though these reforms were evolutionary methods to ward off revolutionary threats.

If the realities of the American way of life lead us to rule out the possibilities of voluntary evolutionary social change along racially or ethnically democratic
lines, we are then faced with the other alternative: revolutionary ideas and methods. But here we encounter a very unique and complex set of problems. For to transform the Negro rebellion into a movement with revolutionary approaches, ideas, and appeals is an immense intellectual and organizational problem. Moreover, it poses what amounts to a new question in America: What, precisely, is revolutionary in form and content? This is not a simple question to answer because the only concept of social revolution that has come out of Western thought since the nineteenth century is the revolutionary overthrow of capital by the combined forces of labor. This is ruled out of our considerations because of the reality of the American capital-labor alliance. To speak, then, of social revolution in the United States from the Negro point of view means a reinterpretation of the meaning of social revolution for our times. This may appear a startling statement but it is, in all evidence, quite true. In investigating this problem, we American Negroes must not lose sight of one fact about the Western world and its intellectual traditions: New social frontiers do not cease to be simply because Western philosophers have no more answers for the problems of the world. Still, we Afro-Americans who have always been excluded to the fringe world of Western society can learn a lot from Western philosophers and pick up where they left off. In this regard, the theories of social revolution thought up by Western philosophers such as Marx and others are bankrupt, passé, and irrelevant in Western society today. Socialism has not come to the Western world through the revolt of the working classes of white nations. As a result, the whole Western world is in serious trouble because social revolution is today the prerogative of the colored peoples. Despite the fact that Western white Marxists may attempt to cast colonial and semi-colonial revolutions in their own Marxian image, it is a fact that these revolutions are all indigenous; original, autonomous and unique in themselves. Marx did not invent social revolution but, at the same time, this does not mean that we cannot learn many things from Marx. The failure of the Marxist revolution in Europe and America has led many intellectuals, especially in Europe, to attempt to reinvestigate and reinterpret social revolution. The Negro intellectual must do the same if the Negro rebellion is ever to become a revolutionary movement in its own right. The Negro rebellion can learn much from other Western critics of revolutionary theory and arrive at its own answers for its own situation. Albert Camus, discussing rebellion and revolution, had this to say:

Rebellion is, by nature, limited in scope. It is no more than an incoherent pronouncement. Revolution, on the contrary, originates in the realm of ideas. Specifically, it is the injection of ideas into historical experience, while rebellion is only the movement that leads from individual experience into the realm of ideas. While even the collective history of a movement of rebellion is always that of a fruitless struggle with facts, of an obscure protest which involves neither methods nor reasons, a revolution is an attempt to shape actions to ideas, to fit the world into a theoretical frame.¹

These words were written by a man who died relatively young, who had become increasingly disturbed and alarmed by the steady deterioration of the
political, moral and spiritual reality of Western Europe. Originally a French
Marxist, Camus recoiled in the face of the obvious collapse and degeneration of
the Marxian revolution between the two World Wars and after. For our
purposes, we need not go into this very complex question as to why the working
classes of European white nations failed to make the hoped-for revolution. Our
immediate problem is not Europe but America, where we live. However, it is
enough to point out that the white capital-labor alliance that has taken place in
America has its parallel in Europe where the white Marxist "revolutionaries"
became less and less revolutionary the more the European colonies became truly
revolutionary. At the root of the whole question of the degeneration of Western
Marxism in Europe was the colonial problem. It was not the Marxist plan that
colored colonies should become liberated before white socialism came into
Europe. The fact that this is what happened threw the European capitalists, and
the Marxists as well, into a state of confusion and panic. The Marxists in Europe
talked like revolutionaries but their internal politics became more and more
gear ed to the necessities of preventing their own capitalist societies from collapse
as a result of colonial losses. In Algeria, for example, where Camus was born, it
is a fact that many French Marxists, when the racial showdown came, turned
against the Algerian rebel forces. These facts, and many more, were not lost on
Camus, who was an honest revolutionary defeated and confounded by the utter
betrayal perpetrated by his own revolutionary tradition and the degeneration of
Western morality.

From Camus we are able to learn the most precise difference between mere
rebellion and viable revolution. More than that, we understand why the Negro
movement, which is a rebellion, has its "revolutionary" limitations: It is a
movement without any unique ideas of its own. The key to the question of
"unique ideas" is lost in the confusion of ideas, or better, the lack of positive
ideas, of what America really is as a nation and the true nature of the Negroes' in
trinsic relationship to the American reality. This is a problem that has not been
adequately or honestly explored in all of its sociological ramifications. It could
not be because, as we have pointed out, the national psychology of the dominant
white ideal prefers to project the image of America as an all-white nation. (Look
at American films, television, and the advertising media, etc.) More than that,
since we are dealing with a society which, besides wanting to be called an all-
white nation, is also the most extensively industrialized capitalist nation in the
world, and also wants desperately to remain capitalistic in order to defend its
"free" institutions by keeping Negroes excluded (white labor is not going to
overthrow it), it behooves us to examine this American capitalism in order to
determine just what kind of economic animal it is. What are its characteristics?
What are its strong points? What are its weaknesses?

American capitalism is not the same as other capitalisms in the Western
world because it developed according to its own peculiar geographical, social,
racial, political, and cultural climate. Moreover, American capitalism helps to
sustain and prop up other capitalisms. What is crucial for capitalism as an
economic system is that beyond the United States capitalism has nowhere else
to go in terms of development. America is the last hope of capitalism as a system.
But in terms of revolutionary ideas, the Negroes' relationship to this American
system is a unique one, since we are excluded, and also for other reasons not yet explored. One significant reason for this uniqueness is that social revolution today is a product of the underdeveloped sections of the world's colored populations where there exists no such highly industrialized social base. For the Negro, this presents a very novel situation; in fact, one of the most unique in world history.

We American Negroes exist in essentially the same relationship to American capitalism as other colonials and semi-colonials have to Western capitalism as a whole. Yet when other semi-colonials of the colored world rebel against the political and economic subjugation of Western capitalism, it is for the aim of having the freedom to build up their own native industrial bases for themselves. Our American Negro rebellion derives from the fact that we exist side by side with the greatest industrial complex the world has ever seen, which we are not allowed to use democratically for ourselves. Hence, while the Negro rebellion emerges out of the same semi-colonial social conditions of others, it must have different objectives in order to be considered revolutionary. In other words, we must locate the weakest sector of the American capitalist “free enterprise” front and strike there. Where is that weak front in the free-enterprise armor? It is in the cultural front. Or better, it is that part of the American economic system that has to do with the ownership and administration of cultural communication in America, i.e., film, theater, radio and television, music, performing and publishing, popular entertainment booking, management, etc. In short, it is that part of the system devoted to the economics and aesthetic ideology involved in the cultural arts of America. If the Negro rebellion is limited by a lack of original social, political and economic ideas to “fit the world into a rhetorical frame,” then it is only in the cultural areas of American life that such new ideas can have any social meaning. What is meant here is that the only observable way in which the Negro rebellion can become revolutionary in terms of American conditions is for the Negro movement to project the concept of Cultural Revolution in America. Why this is so we shall proceed to show by a historical, racial, economic, and cultural analysis of the American Negroes’ many-sided relationship to the American system.

The Negro rebellion in America is destined to usher in a new era in human relations and to add a thoroughly new conception of the meaning and the form and content of social revolution. In order to make social progress the world as a whole must move toward unification within the democratic framework of a human, national, ethnic, or racial variety. A great stride toward this world ideal of unification through national variety has been achieved in the process of dissolution of colonial empires.

In America, however, we have an unsolved problem of a unique type of semi-colonialism. The Negro rebellion comes at this time to give voice to the long suppressed ethnic consciousness of the American Negro as he rises to the task to throw off his semi-colonial yoke. But this Negro rebellion, mistakenly called by some the Negro revolution, is not revolutionary because it projects no new ideas beyond what have already been ratified in the democratic philosophy of the
American Constitution. These constitutional concepts about "freedom" are the heritage of a revolutionary movement ushered in by the industrial revolution of centuries past. Since our traditions of latter-day liberalism are unable to apply these concepts to the realities of race in America, social progress demands that new ideas of social revolution be introduced into the bloodstream of the American tradition. It goes without saying that these new concepts must be extracted from native American social ingredients.

Hence, we have projected the new concept of Cultural Revolution. We maintain that this concept affords the intellectual means, the conceptual framework, the theoretical link that ties together all the disparate, conflicting and contending trends within the Negro movement as a whole in order to transform the movement from a mere rebellion into a revolutionary movement that can "shape actions to ideas, to fit the world into a theoretic frame." What do we mean by Cultural Revolution? Stated simply, Cultural Revolution means an ideological and organizational approach to American social change by revolutionizing the administration, the organization, the functioning, and the social purpose of the entire American apparatus of cultural communication and placing it under public ownership.

What has this to do with the Negro's struggle for racial equality, and why should the American Negro assume the initiative for such a task? Because the American Negro is the only ethnic group in America who has the need, the motivation and the historical prerogative to demand such changes. Also because racial equality cannot be achieved unless the Negro rebellion adopts revolutionary tactics which can enforce structural changes in the administration of certain sections of the national economy. Since the alliance of white capital and labor obviates any challenge to the economic status quo where the production of basic commodities takes place, the Negro movement must challenge free enterprise at its weakest link in the production chain, where no tangible commodities are produced. This becomes the "economic" aspect of the Negro movement. However, it is the cultural aspect of this problem that is most important in terms of form and content in new revolutionary ideas.

The Negro concept of Cultural Revolution demands that both the American national psychology and the organization of American cultural institutions be altered to fit the facts of what America really is. Culturally speaking, America is a European-African-Indian racial amalgam—an imperfect and incompletely realized amalgam. Therefore, the American racial problem is a problem of many aspects, but it is essentially a cultural problem of a type that is new in modern history. Until this is intellectually admitted and sociologically practiced, chaotic and retrograde racial practices and conflicts will continue in American society. That the Negro question in America is essentially a cultural question has escaped the attention of the so-called theoreticians and practitioners of sociology and political and social theory. This is why the concept of Cultural Revolution becomes an intellectual means of introducing a new set of ideas into American social theory. A basic reason why the cultural aspect of Negro reality has been overlooked, dismissed, and neglected is that most articulate and intellectually inclined Negroes are beguiled to think of culture solely in terms of the white Anglo-Saxon ideal, which is the cultural image that America attempts to project to the world. The American national psychology
prefers to be regarded as an all-white nation, and the American cultural arts are, therefore, cultivated to preserve and reflect this all-white ideal. Any other artistic expression is regarded as an exotic curiosity.

If we examine this cultural side of the race question in America very closely, we will find that, historically and culturally speaking, the white American Anglo-Saxon cultural ideal of artistic and aesthetic practices is false, predicated as it is on the myth of Western superiority in cultural tradition, and conceals the true facts of native American cultural development. What the white American creative artist or cultural critic is upholding as “superior” is the Western tradition of cultural creativity stemming from European sources to which the white American Anglo-Saxon (and those others who try to be such and are not) never truly added very much this side of the Atlantic. The statement often heard that “America has no real culture” is not far from the truth.

But to say that white America has not been culturally creative or original does not mean that America as a racial or cultural amalgam has not been culturally or artistically original. The historical truth is that it was the Afro-American cultural ingredient in music, dance and theatrical forms (the three forms of art in which America has innovated) that has been the basis for whatever culturally new and unique that has come out of America. Take away the Afro-American tradition of folk-songs, plantation minstrel, spirituals, blues, ragtime, jazz styles, dance forms, and the first Negro theatrical pioneers in musical comedy of the 1890’s down to Sissle and Blake of the 1920’s, and there would be no jazz industry involving publishing, entertainment, recording; there would have been no Gershwins, Rodgers and Hammersteins, Cole Porters or Car-michaels or popular song tradition—which is based on the Negro blues idiom; there would have been no American musical comedy form—which is America’s only original contribution to theater; there would have been no foxtrot—which has formed the basis for American ballroom dancing (not to mention several other popular dance styles in the history of American dance). In other words, the Afro-American ingredients formed the basis of all “popular culture” as opposed to “classical culture” in America. We can see from this that “cultural” aspects of life in America are closely linked with the development of American racial mores. Moreover, since all of these popular art forms comprise those cultural commodities involved in multimillion dollar industries (which exclude or exploit Negroes as much as possible), there is an organic connection in American capitalism between race, culture, and economics.

Culturally speaking, the American intellectual community has arbitrarily dichotomized the national culture into exclusive divisions—“popular culture” and “classical culture.” In American terms classical culture is the tradition of glorifying the artistic traditions of Western Europe in the seven arts and the desire to cultivate an American extension of this Western tradition. In this endeavor, Americans as a whole have not done very well. The white intellectual community of America is, and always has been, very painfully aware of this American deficiency. Hence, the recurrent complaint: “America has no real culture.” What is meant is that America has no real tradition of a classical culture to match the ascendant European. This fact becomes glaringly noticeable today when America is called upon to demonstrate the cultural results of its “democratic heritage” to the world at large,
which is amazed at how little this country has to offer. That the upper levels of the American cultural community is painfully aware of this was mentioned by the late C. Wright Mills a few years ago: "The United States is now engaged with other nations, in particular Russia, in a full-scale competition for cultural prestige based on nationality. . . . What America has abroad is power; what it does not have at home or abroad is cultural prestige." 82

Despite the grievous lack of a classical culture in America, however, this country always has at its disposal a reserve cultural weapon and that is jazz music, the Afro-American cultural contribution to the national soul. In 1955, The New York Times carried a headline on its front page to the effect: "United States Has a Secret Sonic Weapon—Jazz." The article went on to say: "All Europe now seems to find American jazz as necessary as the seasons . . . American jazz has now become a universal language. It knows no national boundaries . . ." etc. The State Department is quite willing to use jazz as a cultural weapon because it hasn't got much else. The problem posed here is that jazz, in the view of America's white cultural elite, is a "popular" mode of cultural expression and does not make up for the serious lack of American "classical" cultural arts. The question then is why was jazz music never cultivated by musical America into an American school of classical music in the same fashion that European folk-music was incorporated into the European classical music tradition? The answer to this question is also the answer to the question: Why does America have no real culture? American jazz was never seriously developed into an American classical school of musical creation because American composers and critics never really desired it. For to elevate jazz into a serious classical school would have demanded that the whole body of Afro-American folk-music also be elevated and glorified. This would also mean that the Afro-American ethnic minority which originally created this music would have to be culturally glorified and elevated socially, economically and politically. It would mean that the black composer would have to be accepted on this social, cultural, economic, and political level. But this the white American cultural ego would never permit. The inescapable conclusion is this: At the bottom of the whole question of the backward cultural development of America, the cultural banality, the cultural decadence, the cultural debasement of the entire American social scene, lies the reality of racism—racial exclusion, racial exploitation, racial segregation and all the manifestations of the ideology of white superiority.

This whole question of race and culture in America is imbedded in the social roots of the historical development of native American cultural standards and institutions. For this fundamental reason the Negro civil rights movement, at this late stage of its development, cannot go any further; it cannot transform itself into a movement with a revolutionary set of ideas unless it incorporates a cultural program along with its economic, social, and political platforms.

Such a cultural program, however, must be two-sided. It must be concerned not only with the aesthetics of the form and content of artistic creation in America but also with transforming the economic, institutional, business and administrative organizational apparatus that buys and sells, limits or permits, hires and disposes of, distributes or retains, determines or negates, and profits from the creation and distribution of cultural production in America. This is
the meaning, for our purposes, of Cultural Revolution. We maintain that without such a revolution the Negro movement has no point of departure from which to compel the necessary social impact to effect structural changes within the American social system.

Moreover, it seems to be historically determined, if one seriously analyzes and examines the peculiarities of American capitalism, that it is precisely the economic sphere of cultural communications in America that must be revolutionized for more humanistic social use before such changes take place in commodity production, political organization or racial democratization. The theoretical reasoning behind this assumption is that, if the world revolution now in process emerges from the conditions of social underdevelopment, then social revolution in highly developed societies cannot have those same motivations. This would be particularly true for the United States, whose industrial development is greater than that of any other society. When we clearly observe that Western capitalism has cultivated the new class alliance between white labor and white capital in the face of colonial and semi-colonial revolutions, it becomes evident that the old Marxian formula of the revolutionary class struggle between capital and labor is passé and obsolescent. Hence any theory of social revolution must be modernized with a new set of ideas, coming not from the whites, since that is improbable, but from the colored races. This is why the African nations are involved in the cultivation of new social, political, cultural, and economic ideas to fit their respective needs. It is incumbent upon the Afro-American to do the same within his own social context.

What is the precise connection between the Negro rebellion and the African revolution? It is partially answered by saying that the connection is precisely cultural. It could not be anything else but cultural—which already implies "racial" or "ethnic." It certainly is not economic or even political in any serious dimension. What is the meaning of "Negritude," the aesthetic concept projected by the Paris group of African intellectuals sixteen years ago when they organized the Society of African Culture? One of the resolutions of that organizing congress describes the idea of Negritude very succinctly: "The imperious necessity for proceeding toward a rediscovery of historical truth and a re-evaluation of Negro cultures" in order to "revive, rehabilitate, and develop those cultures so as to favour their integration into the general stream of human culture." When Leopold Sedar Senghor met with some Negro authors in New York a few years ago, he told these authors that the American Negro should seriously study the question of the Negro aesthetic in American culture. Leopold Senghor, who is also a leading African poet, is one of the major African intellectuals on the question of Negritude. The unfortunate difficulty here is that Leopold Senghor, who is not an American Negro, understands the implication of Negro culture in American historical development better than any of the Negro writers with whom he discussed the matter. These Negro writers did not understand what Senghor meant, and have not discussed the matter since.

The American branch of the Society of African Culture (AM SAC), which was supposed to take up the question of Negritude as it relates to the American
Negro, is run by a group of culturally white-oriented Negroes who did not believe that the African concept of Negritude really applies to the American Negro and heaped ridicule on Negroes in AMSAC who fought for the cultivation of the concept in America. The real problem was that AMSAC's leadership did not know how to apply the idea. The failure of AMSAC on this aesthetic question of Negritude in America means that the theoretical link between the African revolution and the Negro movement in America has not been established in the politics of the Negro intellectual community in America. This link must be a cultural one for the basic reason that the exploitation practiced on Africans and those of African descent in the Western hemisphere has not only been economic, in terms of labor and natural resources, but it has also been cultural. In America the entire industry of popular music writing, publishing, and selling was established by white appropriation of the whole body of Afro-American folk music—the only original music in America with a broad human appeal. This music has been cheapened, debased and commercialized for popular appeal. The American music industry has been exploiting, cheating, stealing from, browbeating, excluding, plagiarizing Negro singers, jazz musicians, composers, etc., for decades and getting away with it. The cultural exploitation established by white America in the early years of the twentieth century by the white appropriation of Afro-American folk music was the first great manifestation of the racist development in the economics of American culture. This racist cultural doctrine, once established in music, spread through the entire field of cultural expression in America. It has had its poisonous effect on American theater, both musical and dramatic, and a distorting influence on American dance. Today it is still rampant in the jazz fields.

The racial attitudes behind American cultural developments were the basic problem of cultural competition between white and Negro. The whites very quickly realized that from the lowly Negro in America came the only rich vein of untapped and completely original material for song, dance, music and theater. This was the motivation behind the creation of the blackface or burnt cork tradition by the whites. (Ironically, in the nineteenth century Negroes were forced to use blackface in order to compete with whites in the use of Negro theatrical material.) The economic benefits derived from the creative and artistic use of Negro cultural ingredients were reaped by the whites through the simple practice of cultural appropriation of aesthetic ideas not native to their own tradition. As a result there came into being a long line of white creative artists and performers who either enriched themselves or got their start by using Negro material—the Al Jolsons, the George Gershwines, the Amos 'n' Andys, Eugene O'Neill, Ridgely Torrence, Marc Connely, and more, plus scores of plagiarizing white composers (including very big names). Booking agents and managers have for decades made millions by the shrewd exploitation and manipulation of Negro performers and creators over whom they held the life and death economic power to hire or fire.

We have only one Negro "cultural" spokesman today and that is James Baldwin. But he is not talking about culture. In fact, Baldwin does not believe in "race" and would rather not consider himself a Negro author, merely another American author who accidentally happens not to be white. This may sound very "modern" and "New Negroid" but it is negative in the extreme. Baldwin's literary power of expression exists precisely because he is black in America.
all of his gift of creative expression, Baldwin is another example of the process of negation visited upon the Negro intellectual who is overawed by the glitter and glamour of a steel-riveted and chrome-plated Western world in the last stages of cultural and spiritual decline. The tragedy of cultural negation inflicted on the Negro personality in America is that this process of negation induces the negated to negate himself.

Thus it is that the concept of Cultural Revolution brings together in America several seemingly separate and disparate historical trends and processes that started with the industrial revolution and lifted millions out of Europe and Africa and placed them in a fateful social juxtaposition in the New World. This revolutionary process has never really ceased. It has merely halted for a spell of decades only to appear again in new forms with new aims for different peoples and nations. In the beginning the revolutionary leadership came from European whites who ushered in the modern world. But today the revolutionary leadership is the “browns,” “blacks,” and “yellows.” Black revolution in Africa means black revolution in the United States because Africa and the United States are historically welded in that fateful juxtaposition of races which went into their national make-ups in the beginning. America is not immune from those social forces that are changing the world. No nation can step outside of history, and each nation must pay its just dues to historical demands at the proper time or decline.

The Afro-American must understand that he is Africa’s cultural contribution to “the general stream of human culture” as defined by the Paris Society of African Culture. He must understand that his social revolution is nothing if it is not cultural in content. He must understand that all social revolutions are at once social, economic, political, cultural and administrative. But, depending on circumstances, each specific revolution is couched in different central demands. In the United States the only kind of revolution the Negro can make is a cultural revolution, because he represents the only ethnic group who has a political right to raise such a demand. The Negro revolution can be economic, social, political, administrative, or racial in form, but it must be cultural in content. If it is not cultural in content it is not revolutionary, but a mere rebellion without ideas “to fit the world in a theoretic frame.” It is only the cultural needs of the Negro that coincide with or are complementary to the main humanistic need that goes unfulfilled in America despite this country’s economic and administrative achievements—the need for a thriving, creative, humanistically progressive national culture.

Cultural Revolution brings, for the first time in Negro history, a new class of Negro leadership into the arena of public affairs with a national program for social change. This class or social stratum is the Negro writer, dramatist, poet, actor, painter, dancer, architect, designer, composer, arranger, film technician, sculptor, critic, etc. Heretofore, this class among American Negroes has been divided and compartmentalized along craft lines. There has been little or no conception among Negroes of the crucial need for artists of all crafts to work together within one organization comprising all the arts. This lack of cultural unity on the intercraft level existed because of the lack of a comprehensive cultural philosophy among Negroes in the arts. The present "cultural" work among Negroes consists of “integration in the theater,” “integration in the films,” “integration in this and that,” etc. This
amounts to an inconsequential and dead-end cultural approach to American arts. Integration in the arts ignores the racist premises upon which the whole institution of the cultural arts in America is based. American culture is predicated on racial exclusion and the glorification of the white cultural ego. The entire economic and administrative apparatus of cultural communication in America is geared to, dependent upon, and motivated by racial exclusion and the cultural negation of the Negro, and, having no democratic or humanistic role to play in society, becomes of necessity more and more commercialized and more and more unable to deal with the living truths of American social realities. It is a foregone conclusion that a film industry that in unable to deal with the social truths of race relations in America is certainly not about to integrate Negroes in any phase of film production. Therefore, it is the economic and administrative foundations of cultural communications in America that must be radically altered before the social role of cultural communications can be changed and democratized. Until this takes place in the cultural arts there will be no integration in the arts. It is the same thing as asking to join the dead and the dying at the gates of the graveyard of dead civilizations for any Negro to seek integration in American culture as it now stands. This is most certainly not our historical role in world culture. With all the indignities American culture has heaped on the Negro in the past with its blackface imitation, stereotypes, servant-role handouts, lazybone characterizations, the "Mammy" sagas, etc., we should now be embarrassedly particular about asking to be made more ludicrous by participation in the banalities of what passes for "cultural arts." For any Negro today to beg, with childlike and empty-minded mimicry, to have the Negro image further distorted by its inclusion in the whitefaced orgy of spiritual decadence that has corrupted and debased all the cultural arts in America, is to ask that the Negro participate with the whites in their senseless and insane debasement of every humanistic social value that ever came out of the Western cultural tradition. This tradition has come to a sorry end in America as practically the whole cultural outlook retreats from the social realities of America and the world at large into an idiotic ivory tower.

The time has arrived for the Negro creative artists to see that they have a special role to play in the Negro movement in terms of ideas relating to their respective arts, not as interim pinch-hitters for professional civil rights leaders. Rather, the Negro creative artist's role in America is the same as that already outlined by the Society of African Culture in its perspective for the African creative artist and intellectual:

The mission of Negro men of culture within the framework of S. A. C. is to:
(a) assert, uphold and enrich their national cultures; (b) decide the sense of
events and cultural works in the world according to the bearing of these on
their own life and destiny; (c) bring about an increasing awareness of their
responsibilities as men of culture; face to face with their national cultures; face
to face with general culture.

With regard to the present active social class of Negro creative artists,
however, we are up against a difficult ideological problem. The majority of this
group (excepting jazz musicians) are pretty much a-racial in their artistic or aesthetic preferences. Most Negro actors do not believe in a specifically Negro theater. Many Negro writers do not like to be designated "Negro" writers. The ethnic dance forms of the Negro have been abandoned by most Negro dancers of the modern school. With the exception of the jazz musician there exists no specifically Negro school of aesthetics. The fact that such an a-racial attitude exists among the creative artists representing an ethnic minority of eighteen to twenty million people is to be deplored. Here it is shown that the concept of integration is negative, one-sided—a negation of the idea of the social meaning of art itself. "Universality" cannot be used to mean the negation of one's own ethnic origins or the art ingredients or the cultural qualities of those origins. For a Negro artist to take this position means, in effect, that he is accepting as his aesthetic model the white standard in art and aesthetics. The American cultural wasteland has nothing to offer the Negro who is so bent on integrating into nothing. The political task of the Negro artist, then, is to fight for the over-all democratization of the American apparatus of cultural communication in order to make a place for the unrestricted expression of his own ethnic personality, his own innate creative originality. In other words, the Negro must become nationalistic in terms of the ethnic and cultural attributes of his art expression.

These ideas on Cultural Revolution are merely exploratory and are meant to open the question for general discussion. We are seeking definitive answers to the question: What is social revolution in the United States? In doing so, we must seek to inject new ideas into the Negro movement. We believe Cultural Revolution to be a vehicle for the expression of a set of new ideas. The basic social problems implied in the concept of Cultural Revolution are by no means new problems. They emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century in America and became potent social, cultural, and economic factors that shaped American race relations into what they are today. Cultural Revolution is a new concept only insofar as we believe it to be the first definitive attempt to conceptualize these basic social realities into an ethnic or cultural (or even political) philosophy. More must be said about this concept. Simply to present it also raises a score of other questions that must be discussed.

NOTES

Rebellion or Revolution? II

Harold Cruse

Despite many new features of the present-day Negro rebellion, this movement has its roots in the accumulated experiences of the past fifty-odd years. But most of the younger, articulate "radical" elements of Negro leadership imagine themselves to be inspired by ideals whose existential relationships to the here-and-now need no other rationalizations. Thus the movement, while having many historical carryovers, is guided by individuals whose slogans reveal little awareness of historical ingredients that have gone into the making of such a complex social force as is the Negro movement today. As a result, the Negro movement's potential is compromised not only by the hard barriers thrown up by the establishment, but [also] by a leadership whose views about American realities are extremely a-historical, limited and oversimplified.

This leadership outlook has been able to mobilize a great variety of direct mass-actions, some scattered, others concerted. But it has not been sufficient in comprehension to carry these actions beyond the great impasse of the March on Washington. There the great Freedom clamor was absorbed in the emptiness of a great void and the protests became like echoes in a canyon that bounce about in mocking repetition. The march led not to a victory but to a crisis, and many are asking: How could it happen that the voices of Freedom could echo with such a hollow sound?

Part of the answer is that the Negro movement suffers from the serious disease of "historical discontinuity." For example, since World War I a series of world-shaking events, social upheavals and aborted movements have intruded and sharply set succeeding generations of Negroes apart in terms of social experiences. The youngest elements in the Negro movements today areactivists, of one quality or another, who enter the arena unfortified with the knowledge or meaning of many of the vital experiences of Negro radicals born in 1900, 1910, 1920, or 1930. The problem is that too many of the earlier-twentieth-century-vintage Negro radicals have become too conservative for the 1940ers. Worse than that, the oldsters have nothing to hand down to the 1940ers in the way of refined principles of struggle, original social theory, historical analysis of previous Negro social trends or radical philosophy suitable for black people.

In the wake of the March on Washington one semblance of a radical idea did emerge out of the din of hollow protests—the Freedom Now Party as a vehicle for black political expression. But it is already evident from the discussions going on within this embryonic political movements that its leading voices are far from grasping the nature and scope of the problems inherent in the Freedom Now Party idea. The leadership of the Freedom Now
Party inherits the peculiar disease of all Negro movements—historical discontinuity. This leadership would like to pick up the new banner across which is emblazoned “Political Action!” and go forward. But to what and where? How can the Freedom Now Party manage to fill the great void that greeted the March on Washington? The simple fact of raising the issue of a black political party does not mean that the views of those who raise it are any less compromised by historical discontinuity than those of others. For the problems facing the FNP are historically cumulative. It falls to the FNP to attempt to unravel the knot that binds Negro consciousness with the multiple strictures of ideological confusion and ethnic disorientation. A black political party that is going to mean anything in America has to be a party with an ideology that is persuasive enough to enable Negroes to cope with extremely difficult economic, political, and cultural problems peculiar to American society. But parties with such an ideology are not built overnight—as some of our superenthusiastic FNPers are prone to think. The Freedom Now Party comes into existence at the end of a fifty-year period whose experiences have, for all political intents and purposes, gone wasted.

Consider the fact that it has taken all these years, from 1910 when the NAACP was first organized to August, 1963 in Washington, to bring home the fact that NAACP methods (or variations thereof) are insufficient for achieving Negro aspirations in America. Did not Bayard Rustin, one of the leading generals of “marching” campaigns, admit (N.Y. Times, 12/2/63): “The civil rights movement not only reached an impasse with its current tactics but also had retrogressed in many cities to conditions that existed before this year’s upsurge.” Mr. Rustin said more that that. We quote:

Interviewed at Howard University . . . Mr. Rustin described the tactics of lying down in the streets to prevent the movement of trucks, and other forms of direct action, as “gimmicks.” He said there was a danger that the civil rights organizations would become wedded to these gimmicks as ends in themselves.

The civil rights movement had gone as far as it could with its original approach and the time had come to broaden the movement which, he added, faces the danger of degenerating into a sterile sectarianism.

Heroism and ability to go to jail should not be substituted for an overall social reform program. We need a political and social reform program that will not only help the Negroes but one that will help all Americans. Only then can we win.

In The New York Times of November 12, 1963, other leaders were quoted:

“Direct action efforts have failed,” said the leaders of New York City’s civil rights organizations. “Picketing and work stoppages . . . not the answer,” said a Teamsters Union leader. “It’s a political matter and it must be treated as a political matter.”

Well, many of us black radicals knew this a long time before the March on Washington took place, but it was considered akin to racial treason to say so.
The trouble is that leaders of Mr. Rustin’s type have always been very late in waking up to the realities. When he advises Negroes to “shift tactics” he is tardy, because thousands of Negroes have already shifted to positions which it is very doubtful Mr. Rustin himself would take. And do you think that any of Bayard Rustin’s co-strategists among the Big Six Rights General Staff (James Farmer, Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King, Jr., A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin) will pay any heed to his late but sage advice? No! More marches are planned to state capitols and city halls and a proliferation of more “gimmicks.” The great sit-in morality crusade will continue in a society predicated on immorality that breeds the pathological martyrdom of the jailhouse. The constant search will go on for new styles of “causes” with new martyrs and other Negro martyred personalities to romanticize in the left-wing press with new “defense” committees. This whole tragi-comedy of racial frustration is an indication that fifty years of protest has left the senior leadership bankrupt in terms of social and political imagination, trapped between the grave limitations of their philosophies and the crushing might of the establishment which they cannot dent.

There is no one leader or school of civil rights thought responsible for this state of affairs. It is the collective weakness peculiar to a class—a political disease endemic to the entire civil rights leadership. Except for an abundance of lawyers for the battle of attrition on the legal front, this class is not even technically equipped for reform. Who will replace E. Franklin Frazier and W. E. B. Du Bois in the social sciences? Where are the Negro economists, statisticians, etc.? Practically, the entire civil rights leadership reveals the propensity for loud protest and quiet status climbing; i.e. social opportunism. Thus Mr. Rustin’s demand for “a political and social reform program” will fall on deaf ears and barren ground. What kind of social reform movement will come from a class which is characterized by a complete disdain for advanced social theory of any kind but has a strong affinity for the very social values of the establishment which it is alleged to be fighting against? Political and social reform Mr. Rustin demands. We wonder what Mr. Rustin will do to implement his own suggestion. The Freedom Now Party movement has to overcome fifty years of wasted experiences which have not left us a single school of social reform, radical or otherwise, to cure the crisis-ills of the civil rights movement. In order to advance towards Mr. Rustin’s “political and social reform program” it is necessary to review history, because the seeds of the protest movement's failures lie hidden in the record of past decades. A movement that is not historically determined has little future.

All the evidence indicates that the roots of the current crisis of the Negro movement are to be found in the period between the end of World War I and the years of the Great Depression. This is what is meant by “historical discontinuity.” For most of the social issues that absorb the attention of all the Negro radical elements today were prominently foreshadowed in these years. Yet the strands between the period called by some the “Fabulous Twenties” and the current Negro movement have been broken. The real implications of this historical discontinuity will not be appreciated unless one presents a panoramic view of that period. Consider what was happening.

In the early 1920’s two of the great giants in the history of Negro leadership clashed in a bitter ideological conflict over the destiny of black people in the Western world—W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. The strange thing about
this clash was that both of these personalities were strong advocates of two different brands of “Pan-Africanism” which neither one could cultivate in his own homeland. The West Indians did not back Garvey’s nationalism in Jamaica, B. W. I., and Du Bois’ first Pan-African Congress had to be sponsored by France—one of the leading imperialist powers—who turned over the Paris Grand Hotel. At home Du Bois was far from being a nationalist. At the time, he was editor of the NAACP’s Crisis magazine, with a circulation of over 100,000 annually. The NAACP was then, as now, the leading integrationist organization among Negroes. But it is noteworthy that the word “integration” was not in vogue at the time as a synonym for “civil rights.” Integration as a slogan appears to have gained wide usage during World War II and after because of the urgency of the campaign to integrate the armed forces.

The clash between Du Bois and Garvey was a bitter one. The former denounced Garvey as (to put it mildly) “bombastic and impractical” while Garvey scornfully relegated Du Bois to the Negro “cultural assimilationists” whom Garvey despised. That the Du Bois–NAACP philosophy and Garvey should so sharply conflict is understandable. But the fact that black nationalism should arise in the United States with such persuasive mass-potency raised many questions about the Negro movement in America which were not settled at that time or even understood. For the actions and reactions of both Du Bois and Garvey to black nationalism indicated that both were unable to deal with nationalist ideology purely within the American social framework where it is destined to play out its positive role. In this sense was the “Back to Africa” aspect of Garvey impractical and escapist in the same way as is the “Separate State” idea of the Muslims escapist. The tendency of Negro nationalism of all varieties to drift toward escapist solutions and ideals is the result of an inability to find the proper economic-political framework that has relevance to American realities. Truthfully, it would have been too much to expect the 1920 Negro radicals to be detached and objective enough to clarify the integrationist vs. nationalist tendencies and mold them theoretically into a political fusion. Dialectical processes have never really been understood in America. The two fundamentally basic trends behind Negro racial ideology in America, though sharply etched out in terms of organizational confrontation, got lost and went unresolved in the turbulence that seethed in American society during the “Fabulous Twenties.”

World War I shook the very foundations of world capitalism in Europe and inspired liberating currents within the colonies. It sent Garvey to New York and Du Bois to Paris in search of “Pan-Africanism.” It uprooted southern Negroes by the thousands for the trek to the North to meet West Indians that many had never known existed. It sent Negro soldiers to France to fight for “democracy” and brought them back to march into a race war on the home front because the KKK had been revived again in 1915. The real semicolonial status of the Negro was grimly revealed and lynch-law raged across the country north, south, and west as black soldiers in uniform had to fight for their very lives, homes, and families. “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting,” said Du Bois’ Crisis magazine as it echoed the temper of the times, and the NAACP
opened up its great postwar protest campaign in 1919. Other organizations entered the crucial fray—the National Equal Rights League, the National Race Congress and the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, a Southern group. All during this time, more and more, Negroes were streaming north.

Though the thunder of racial wars boomed ominously, it cannot be overlooked that the post–World War I turmoil in America dug deep into the national consciousness, churned it up, and threw onto the open stage of life everything that was sick and ailing in the nation; i.e., in American capitalism. Both black and white were profoundly agitated and, unlike the 1950's and 1960's, were openly saying so in every conceivable way. Today the only real agitation is black. A. Philip Randolph's Messenger, "The only Negro radical magazine in America," preached "social revolution." A Harlem radical press evolved—Challenge, The Crusader, The Emancipator, etc. The Federal Government investigated "Radicalism and Sedition Among the Negroes..." The 1920's saw a genuinely serious questioning of the American national purpose, a great rash of individual quests for the relationship of man, the individual, to and in the collective badly shaken by world events. Sinclair Lewis' novel, Main Street, described the drab, dehumanizing effects of capitalism on American urban life which sent intellectuals by the scores escaping to emigré existence in Paris. Many a Negro soldier wished he had never returned. The twentieth-century revolution was continuing and it sent its currents into odd places.

Claude McKay, the West Indian poet and novelist, preceded Garvey in New York. He was uprooted and a poet-seeker on the move. So was Langston Hughes, out of Joplin, Missouri, who later worked his way to Africa in a romantic search for "lost identity." McKay found a literary home as associate editor of Liberator magazine, founded in 1919 by the leading white radicals of the time, one of whom was the famous John Reed, who had recently written Ten Days That Shook the World. Here McKay clashed with Michael Gold, who later became the main "cultural" commissar of the newly formed American Communist Party. McKay resigned. The white radicals on the Liberator staff made the first attempt to contact Garveyites in Harlem for an "alliance." They failed, and thus the incompatibility of Negro nationalism and white radicalism was first demonstrated. But McKay, too, rejected Garveyism and revealed that the black intellectual did not really understand what was happening and was forming the wrong alliances. The uprooted McKay, always the seeker, took off for Moscow to learn about the "new society" that was causing capitalist nightmares. He was well received, wined and dined, and much was made over the "American" Negro. He hobnobbed with the top leaders of revolution at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International which he described as "The Pride and Pomp of Proletarian Power." The black radical always has reasons to doubt. After touring Europe, McKay returned Home to Harlem (his next book). Some left the United States and did not return for a long time. Josephine Baker, the famous singer-comedienne, came out of St. Louis, was briefly seen on New York stages in Negro shows, but left for Paris to become the famed attraction of the Folies Bergere and a household word in Europe. Some of us heard her perform in the North African desert in World War II, but didn't know her story then.

Creative things blossomed in the 1920's like flowers on a battlefield and the Negro, despite his economic and social disabilities, was going through another
phase of his unique experience in the Western world. It was during the years of his harshest oppression on slave plantations that the most divine Negro spirituals were created. Similarly, during the post-World War I years when American racism reached its highest pitch in this century, Negroes again reached for another level of cultural attainment. For the 1920's ushered in the age of Paul Robeson, Countee Cullen, Charles Gilpin, Rose McClendon, and Jean Toomer, whose literary career was short but brilliant before he disappeared. The “New York Wits,” a thriving literary movement composed of a blend of older and younger writers, won the critical spotlight for several years. Among them were James Weldon Johnson, mature and experienced, and the younger Wallace Thurman, Jessie Fauset, Rudolph Fisher, and others. Most of them were bitter, ironical and satirical.

Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake brought new stature to the musical theater with *Shuffle Along*, a sensation in 1921 which established a new vogue. Ethel Waters and the immortal Florence Mills sang and performed before thousands whose critical acclaim was boundless. The latter's career was cut short by her early death in 1927; the "peerless child artist" who became the "Little Blackbird" had sung a brief song. Florence Mills was the greatest, it is said, but she was representative of scores of Negroes of varying talents of that decade who appeared in search of fulfillment to light up the American cultural scene. Alain Locke, the scholar, chronicled that movement in his study of the Negro Renaissance, *The New Negro*.

American whites were also having a cultural revival and the process by which the whites intervened in the Negro revival, contained it, distorted it, and fastened the incubus of cultural paternalism on this Negro movement has not been told. The great symbol of this process was the folk-opera, *Porgy and Bess*—written by whites for whites who at first did not even think that Negroes were good enough to perform it. Its first recordings were by whites in "black-voice," and it represents the classic example of cultural exploitation practiced by whites on the Negro under capitalist culture. Its distorted social and aesthetic values have been projected ever since as the outstanding "American" musical accomplishment.

Briefly, this describes what the 1920's were like. The lynching mobs fought the Negro for his very life while the white aesthetes ran to Harlem and other places for the unique experience of warming their chilly souls and fingers by his cultural bloodstream. White writers and aesthetes, such as Eugene O'Neill and Carl Van Vechten, the patron of Negro artists, discovered the creative power of the Negro "passion," hailed it, used it, exploited it, and sold it. The Communists and Michael Gold scolded the Negro artists for falling prey to Van Vechten's "bourgeois" corruption at the Harlem parties of the famous A'Leila Walker, where white Bohemia from Greenwich Village and black Bohemia made "social" revolution. Of Van Vechten, Langston Hughes wrote: "He never talks grandiloquently about democracy... But he lives it with sincerity and humor." The Communists who did talk so much about "democracy" never understood the role of Negro art in capitalist society. Michael Gold, who was a great admirer of Leon Trotsky (that is, before Stalin expelled him from Russia), had hailed Trotsky's book *Literature and Revolution* when it appeared a few years before. In this book Trotsky had said:
It would be monstrous to conclude that the technique of bourgeois art is not necessary to the worker. Yet there are many who fall into this error. "Give us," they say, "something even pock-marked, but our own." ... Those who believe in a "pock-marked" art are imbued with contempt for the masses.

Michael Gold never believed this. The Communist white never understood real Negro proletarian art in the 1920's. It was the non-political whites who hailed "The Jazz Age" when the "real" Negro soul was revealed. One exuberant white music critic said that Negro music was an antidote to white "spiritual bankruptcy." But the roots of American spiritual bankruptcy were basically socio-economic, of which race was an ugly surface manifestation, and which was concealed by capitalism's booming prosperity. People could exist, if not really live in the full meaning of the word. Prosperity, especially in the North, made the newly formed Communist Party's appeal to white labor a one-sided dialogue between radical intellectuals and themselves. It was an oddly eclectic period when the elements of the melting pot boiled almost to the rims of the oceans. It was a decade of extreme poverty and riches, hopes, dreams, despair and disillusionment. Culture did boom. In fact, there were all the ingredients of "Cultural Revolution" in the making in America—the real American revolution of that time, which is yet unfinished. But the primitive Marxists of the 1920's did not comprehend that American capitalism's technological advances in mass cultural media—films, radio, and music records, etc.—was a new capitalistic feature to replace Marx's "religion" as the real modern opium of the people. Instead, in the intense debate on politics vs. art that was raging in the leftwing between John Dos Passos and Michael Gold of the Liberator, the Gold faction won out and subordinated the creative artist, who was already being crushed by capitalist culture, to the domination of a "politics" not even relevant to the America scene. Thus did the Marxist leftwing separate itself at the outset from the American mainstream; its influence was forever tangential. The Negro affinity with the leftwing during the 1920's was a mere flirtation and the nationalists went their own way. Radical artists and radical politicians split and went their own ways. As Genevieve Haggard, one of the leading radical poets of the time, put it in her book, My Days:

It is the artist's fault because he is afraid of revolution. It is the propagandist's fault for giving the artist a job he cannot perform. ... From now on, as long as this division holds our art will have no fertility.

This was written in 1925 as the poet reviewed what the Liberator radicals had accomplished before the magazine folded in 1924. And how true her prophecy had been for America! Claude McKay had already seen that Michael Gold's political position on the role of the radical artist was destructive and had resigned from the Liberator. The high water-mark of the 1920's had been reached. Negro nationalism went into decline after Garvey was jailed in 1927. A. Philip Randolph's Messenger folded in 1928. Two years later the "Fabulous Twenties" disappeared in the catastrophe of the 1929 economic crash. And all the great issues, trends and expectations that agitated and moved Negroes of the time were left suspended and unresolved in the memories of those who first flourished in that decade.
In the devastating pall of the 1930's depression the great issue among Negroes was sheer survival, which lessened the ardor for nationalism, and "protest" took on other survival meanings. Thus all Negro ideology from the 1920's, whether nationalistic, integrationist, separatist, or cultural, fell under the influence of "New Dealism," or the expedient lure of the white labor movement, or the mystique of the Marxist left given prominence by hard times.

Came World War II and a new generation of Negroes was caught up in another crisis of world capitalism; but the "historical continuity" between them and their elders of 1917 was already broken. The 1930's produced a generation who spoke another language. It was not understood that though the setting for the world conflict that was brewing was on another plane and in another key, the fundamental issues would always be the same in this century. Hence, nationalism the world over would become a universal theme of liberation that one would have to listen to. And the Negro in America, born in 1920, 1930, or even 1940, would hear the echoes of the Du Bois-Garvey conflict over the meaning of nationalism come back to him through other voices from other platforms. Only this time the Negro in America must resolve the conflict between integration and nationalism in a positive way once and for all.

Black Nationalism in America lapses into romantic and escapist moods so long as it depends on emotional slogans, the messianic complex for a leader, or empty militant aggressiveness. Nationalism the world over is being expressed and must be expressed through economic, political, and cultural institutions to make them conform to nationalist aspirations. That these questions are not understood among Negroes is more than obvious. But the ability of the Negro movement to proceed beyond its present impasse depends on the solutions to these problems.

NOTES

Anatomy of a Rebellion: A Political-Economic Analysis

Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson, Jr., and Walter C. Farrell, Jr.

It is quite impossible to understand the events surrounding the acquittal of the four police officers accused of brutally beating Rodney King without placing them within the local and national circumstances and forces that have deepened class and racial inequalities over the past two decades. Both at the local and national level, the trajectory of economic, political, and social trends has exacerbated the ever-so-fragile social fabric of our nation’s cities, making ripe the conditions that kindled the social explosion that occurred in Los Angeles on 29 April 1992.

In this essay, we reflect on the Los Angeles civil disorder of 1992 from an urban political economy perspective. It is our contention that the course and magnitude of changes in the urban political economy of American cities in general, and Los Angeles in particular, were crucial in bringing to the forefront the contradictions underlying the Los Angeles urban rebellion. Thus, this essay is an anatomy of the civil unrest that seeks to unravel its relationship to rebellions of the past, highlighting both the ever-changing and unchanging nature of the relationship of black Americans to the economic and political order, and the consequences of the introduction of new actors into the sociopolitical mix of large American cities. In order to accomplish this, we situate the civil unrest within the broader context of the recent demographic, social, and economic changes occurring in the Los Angeles milieu. The object of this analysis is to ground the rebellion in the context of a political system that is frayed at the edges in its attempt to integrate new voices into the body politic and, at the same time, is incapable of bringing into the economic mainstream significant portions of the African-American community (traditionally one of the most economically marginal segments of American society). Can the efforts that have been spawned as a consequence of the urban rebellion achieve a modicum of success in confronting these difficult challenges? We address this issue in a brief but critical review of existing policies and proposals that have been advanced to “rebuild” Los Angeles. Finally, we outline our own strategy for redeveloping South Central Los Angeles, one which is designed to address the real “seeds” of the civil unrest.

ANATOMY OF THE REBELLION

The recent civil unrest in Los Angeles was the worst such event in recent U.S. history. None of the major civil disorders of the 1960s, including the Watts rebellion of 1965, required a level of emergency response or exacted a toll—in terms of loss of life, injuries, and property damage and loss—comparable to the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992 (table 1). The burning, looting, and violence that ensued following the rendering of a not-guilty verdict in the police-brutality trial required the deployment of not only the full forces of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, but also 10,000 National Guardsmen and 3,500 military personnel (table 2). The Fire Department received 5,537 structure fires calls and responded to an estimated 500 fires. An estimated 4,000 businesses were destroyed. Fifty-two people died and 2,383 people were injured, including 20 law-enforcement and fire personnel. Property damage and loss have been estimated at between $785 million and $1 billion (table 1).

In contrast to the civil disorders of the 1960s, this was a multiethnic rebellion. The diversity is reflected in table 3, which depicts, for the period 30 April through 4 May, arrests by race/ethnicity. It has been estimated that 1,200 of the 16,000 plus arrested were illegal aliens, roughly 40% of whom were handed over to INS officials for immediate deportation.
### Table 1: Toll from Selected Rebellions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/State</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number Arrested</th>
<th>Number Injured</th>
<th>Number Dead</th>
<th>Property Damage</th>
<th>Other Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newark, NJ</td>
<td>12-17 July 1967</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>$58,795,605</td>
<td>300 fires set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>23-28 July 1967</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>162,396,707</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>11-17 August 1965</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>182,565,079</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>4-9 April 1968</td>
<td>6,036</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45,292,079</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>29-30 April 1992</td>
<td>16,291</td>
<td>2,383</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>785 million</td>
<td>500 fires set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: n.a. = not available.

### Table 2: Law Enforcement Personnel on Duty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Duty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Police and County Sheriff's Department</td>
<td>3,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Highway Patrol</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Guard</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 3: Los Angeles Rebellion, 1992: Arrest by Race/Ethnicity (30 April Through 4 May 1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>LAPD</th>
<th>Sheriff's Department</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>2,764</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>3,492</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>2,832</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2,408</td>
<td>2,492</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,438</td>
<td>4,018</td>
<td>9,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(table 4). Also in contrast to the civil disorders of the 1960s, the burning and looting were neither random nor limited to a single neighborhood; rather, the response was targeted, systematic, and widespread, encompassing much of the legal city. This fact has led us to purposefully and consistently refer to the civil unrest as a rebellion as opposed to a riot.

### The Verdict and the Rebellion in Retrospect

We think it is safe to say that both the verdict rendered in the police-brutality trial, and the widespread burning, looting, and violence which ensued after the jury issued its decision, shocked most Americans. In retrospect, however, we would like to suggest that both the verdict and the subsequent rebellion were quite predictable. The treatment of black suspects by the police and black defendants by the courts represents a continuity in the experience of blacks in relationship to the criminal-justice system.

The outcome of the trial, in our view, was predictable for two reasons. The first pertains to the defense attorneys' successful bid for a change of venue for the trial. Sini Valley, the site of the trial, and Ventura County more generally, is a predominantly white community known for its strong stance on law and order, as evidenced by the fact that a significant number of LAPD officers live there. Thus, the four white police officers were truly judged by a jury of their peers. Viewed in this context, the verdict should not have been unanticipated.

The second development that made the outcome of the trial predictable, in retrospect, was the defense attorneys' ability to put Mr. King, instead of the four white police officers, on trial. (We should note here, parenthetically, that the media is also guilty in this regard, as evidenced by its consistent characterization of the case as "the Rodney King trial.") The defense attorneys, in effect, played the so-called "race card"; they painted Mr. King as unpredictable, dangerous, and uncontrollable, much as Mr. Bush, in the 1988 presidential cam-
TABLE 4 LOS ANGELES REBELLION, 1992: ILLEGAL ALIENS ARRESTED
AND DEPORTED BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


campaign, used Willie Horton, the convicted rapist released on a temporary work furlough only to commit another heinous crime, to paint Mr. Dukakis as being soft on crime.3

In today's society, the Willie Horton stereotype, recent surveys tell us, is often applied categorically to black males, irrespective of their social and economic status, but especially if they reside in the inner city.4 It is our contention that the jury agreed with the defense attorneys' portrayal of Mr. King as dangerous and uncontrollable, and thus rendered a verdict in favor of the four white police officers, notwithstanding the seemingly irrefutable videotaped evidence.

Why do we think, in hindsight, that the civil unrest following the verdict in the police-brutality trial was predictable? We believe that the response was not about the verdict in the police-brutality trial per se; rather, the civil unrest reflected the high degree of frustration and alienation that had built up among the citizens of South Central Los Angeles over the last 20 years. The rebellion as we view it in retrospect, was a response not to a single but rather to repeated acts of what is widely perceived in the community to be blatant abuse of power by the police and the criminal-justice system more generally.5

The civil unrest was also a response to a number of broader, external forces which have increasingly isolated the South Central Los Angeles community, geographically and economically, from the mainstream of the Los Angeles society.6 These forces include: recent structural changes in the local (and national) economy; wholesale disinvestment in the South Central Los Angeles community by banks and other institutions, including the local city government; and nearly two decades of conservative federal policies which have simultaneously affected adversely the quality of life of the residents of South Central Los Angeles and accelerated the decline and deterioration of their neighborhoods.

Moreover, these developments were occurring at a time when the community was experiencing a radical demographic transformation, an unprecedented change in population accompanied by considerable tensions and conflict between long-term residents and the more recent arrivals.7 Viewed from this perspective, the verdict in the police-brutality trial was merely the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.8

SEEDS OF THE REBELLION

The videotaped beating of Mr. Rodney King was only the most recent case in which there were serious questions about whether LAPD officers used excessive force to subdue or arrest a black citizen. For several years, the City of Los Angeles has had to pay out millions of taxpayers' dollars to settle the complaints and lawsuits of citizens who were victims of LAPD abuse. Moreover, the black citizens of the city of Los Angeles have been disproportionately victimized by the LAPD's use of the choke hold, a tactic employed to subdue individuals who are perceived to be uncooperative. During the 1980s, 18 citizens of Los Angeles died as a result of LAPD officers' use of the choke hold; 16 of them reportedly were black.9

Accordingly, the not-guilty verdict rendered in the police-brutality trial was also only the most recent in a series of cases in which the decisions emanating from the criminal-justice system were widely perceived in the black community to be grossly unjust. This decision came closely on the heels of another controversial verdict in the Latasha Harlins case. A videotape revealed that Ms. Harlins—an honor student at a local high school—was fatally shot in the back of the head by a Korean shopkeeper following an altercation over a carton of orange juice. The shopkeeper received a six month suspended sentence and was ordered to do six months of community service.10
These and related events have occurred in the midst of drastic demographic change in South Central Los Angeles. Over the last two decades, the community has been transformed from a predominantly black to a mixed black and Latino area (Figure 1). Today, nearly one-half of the South Central Los Angeles population is Latino. In addition, there also has been an ethnic succession in the local business environment, characterized by the exodus of many of the Jewish shopkeepers and a substantial influx of small, family-run Korean businesses. This ethnic succession in both the residential environment and the business community has not been particularly smooth. The three ethnic groups—blacks, Latinos, and Koreans—have found themselves in conflict and competition with one another over jobs, housing, and scarce public resources.9

Part of this conflict stems from the fact that the Los Angeles economy has undergone a fairly drastic restructuring over the last two decades.12 This restructuring includes, on the one hand, the decline of traditional, highly unionized, high-wage manufacturing employment; and on the other, the growth of em-
employment in the high-technology-manufacturing, the craft-specialty, and the advanced-service sectors of the economy. As Figure 2 shows, South Central Los Angeles—the traditional industrial core of the city—bore the brunt of the decline in manufacturing employment, losing 70,000 high-wage, stable jobs between 1978 and 1982.  

At the same time these well-paying and stable jobs were disappearing from South Central Los Angeles, local employers were seeking alternative sites for their manufacturing activities. As a consequence of these seemingly routine decisions, new employment growth nodes or “technopoles” emerged in the San Fernando Valley, in the San Gabriel Valley, and in El Segundo near the airport in Los Angeles County, as well as in nearby Orange County (Fig 3). In addition, a number of Los Angeles-based employers established production facilities in the Mexican border towns of Tijuana, Ensenada, and Tecate. Between 1978 and 1982, over 200 Los Angeles-based firms, including Hughes Aircraft, Northrop, and Rockwell, as well as a host of smaller firms, participated in this deconcentration process. Such capital flight, in conjunction with the plant closings, has essentially closed off to the residents of South Central Los Angeles access to what were formerly well-paying, unionized jobs.  

It is important to note that, while new industrial spaces were being established elsewhere in Los Angeles County (and in nearby Orange County as well as along the U.S.-Mexico border), new employment opportunities were emerging within or near the traditional industrial core in South Central Los Angeles (Figure 3). But, unlike the manufacturing jobs that disappeared from this area, the new jobs are in competitive sector industries, which rely primarily on undocumented labor and pay, at best, minimum wage.

In part as a consequence of these developments, and partly as a function of employers' openly negative attitudes toward black workers, the black-male jobless rate in some residential areas of South Central Los Angeles hovers around 50%. Whereas joblessness is
the central problem for black males in South Central Los Angeles, concentration in low-paying, bad jobs in competitive sector industries is the main problem for the Latino residents of the area. Both groups share a common fate: incomes below the poverty level (Figure 4). Whereas one group is the working poor (Latinos), the other is the jobless poor (blacks).17

In addition to the adverse impact of structural changes in the local economy, South Central Los Angeles also has suffered from the failure of local institutions to devise and implement a plan to redevelop and revitalize the community. In fact, over the last two decades, the local city government has consciously pursued a policy of downtown and westside redevelopment at the expense of South Central Los Angeles. One needs only to look at the skyline of downtown and the so-called Wilshire corridor—that twenty-mile stretch extending along Wilshire Boulevard from downtown to the Pacific Ocean—to see the impact of this policy.18

Finally, the seeds of the rebellion are rooted in nearly two decades of conservative policy making and implementation at the federal level. Many policy analysts talk about the adverse impact on minorities and their communities of Democratic president Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" programs of the 1960s, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the Republicans have been in control of the White House for all but four (the Carter years) of the past 20 years.19 A number of public policies implemented during this period, and especially during the years when Mr. Reagan was president, we contend, served as sparks for the recent civil unrest. Three of these policy domains are worthy of note here.

The first pertains to the federal government's establishment of a laissez-faire business climate in order to facilitate the competitiveness of U.S. firms. Such a policy, in retrospect, appears to have facilitated the large number of plant closings in South Central Los Angeles and capital flight to the U.S./
Mexico border and various Third World countries. Between 1982 and 1989 there were 131 plant closings in Los Angeles, idling 124,000 workers. Fifteen of these plants moved to Mexico or overseas.\textsuperscript{20}

The second involved the federal government's dismantling of the social safety net in minority communities. Perhaps most devastating for the South Central Los Angeles area has been the defunding of community-based organizations (CBOs). Historically, CBOs were part of that collectivity of social resources in the urban environment which encouraged the inner-city disadvantaged, especially disadvantaged youth, to pursue mainstream avenues of social and economic mobility and discouraged dysfunctional or antisocial behavior. In academic lingo, CBOs were effective "mediating" institutions in the inner city.\textsuperscript{21}

During the last decade or so, however, CBOs have become less effective as mediating institutions. The reason for this is that the federal support they received was substantially reduced. In 1980, when Mr. Reagan took office, CBOs received an estimated 48% of their funding from the federal government.\textsuperscript{22}

As part of the Reagan Administration's dismantling of the social safety net, many CBOs were forced to reduce substantially programs that benefited the most disadvantaged in the community. Inner-city youth have been most adversely affected by this defunding of community-based initiatives and other safety-net programs.

It should be noted, moreover, that the dismantled social safety net has been replaced with a criminal dragnet. That is, rather than allocate support for social programs that discourage or prevent disadvantaged youth from engaging in dysfunctional behavior, over the past decade or so, the federal government has pursued a policy of resolving the problems of the inner city through the criminal-justice system.

Given this shift in policy orientation, it should not be surprising that, nationally, 25% of prime-working-age young black males (ages 18–35) are either in prison, in jail, on probation, or otherwise connected to the criminal-justice system.\textsuperscript{23} Although reliable statistics are hard to come by, the anecdotal evidence suggests that at least 25% of the young black males in South Central Los Angeles have had a brush with the law. What are the prospects of landing a job if you have a criminal record? Incarceration breeds despair and in the employment arena, it is the scarlet letter of unemployment.\textsuperscript{24}
Educational initiatives enacted during the late 1970s and early 1980s, which were designed to address the so-called "crisis" in American education, constitute the third policy domain. There is actually a very large body of social-science evidence which shows that such policies as tracking by ability group, grade retention, and the increasing reliance on standardized tests as the ultimate arbiter of educational success have, in fact, disenfranchised large numbers of black and brown youth. In urban school systems, they are disproportionately placed in special-education classes and are more likely than their white counterparts to be subjected to extreme disciplinary sanctions.  

The effects of these policies in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) are evident in the data on school-leaving behavior. For the Los Angeles Unified School district as a whole, 39.2% of all the students in the class of 1988 dropped out at some point during their high-school years. However, for high schools in South Central Los Angeles, the dropout rates were substantially higher, between 63% and 79%. It is important to note that the dropout problem is not limited to the high-school population. According to data compiled by LAUSD, approximately 25% of the students in the junior high schools in South Central Los Angeles dropped out during the 1987–88 academic year.

Twenty years ago it was possible to drop out of school before graduation and find a well-paying job in heavy manufacturing in South Central Los Angeles. Today, however, those types of jobs are no longer available in the community, as we noted previously. Juxtaposing the adverse effects of a restructured economy and the discriminatory aspects of education reforms, what emerges is a rather substantial pool of inner-city males of color who are neither at work nor in school. These individuals are, in effect, idle; and previous research shows us that it is this population which is most likely to be in gangs, to engage in drug trafficking, and to participate in a range of other criminal behavior. Moreover, we know that it is this population of idle, minority males that experiences the most difficulty forming and maintaining stable families, which accounts, at least in part, for the high percentage of female-headed families with incomes below the poverty level in South Central Los Angeles.

EXPLAINING THE SOURCES OF A MULTIETHNIC REBELLION

The most distinctive aspect of the Los Angeles rebellion was its multiethnic character. While blacks were the source of the disturbances as they broke out on the first night of the rebellion, by the second evening it was clear that the discontent that emerged initially was shared by many of the city's largest racial group, the Latino community. As we have just pointed out, the economically depressed Latinos in Los Angeles are comprised of a working-poor population, characterized by a large and significant core of Mexican and Central American immigrants. But what is interesting is that the rebellion did not encompass the traditional Mexican-American community of East Los Angeles. Indeed, the fires and protest were silent in these communities as political leaders and local residents ardently cautioned residents against "burning your own community." Nevertheless, Latinos in South Central Los Angeles did not hesitate to participate in looting, particularly against Korean merchants. How do we explain this pattern?

One important element necessary to explain the uneven participation of Latinos in the rebellion is to place the Latino experience into the context of struggles to incorporate that community politically into the electoral system in Los Angeles city and county. With the largest Latino population outside of Mexico City, Latinos have been severely underrepresented in city and county governments. In a struggle emanating from the 1960s, Latinos, particularly Mexican Americans, have been involved in protesting this situation, in ways ranging from street-level, grass-roots activity to highly coordinated court challenges to racially biased redistricting schemes that have unfairly diluted Latino voting strength. That struggle has just recently begun to bear fruit. In the important court case Garza et al. v. County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County was found guilty of racial bias in the redistricting process and ordered to accept an alternative redistricting plan that led to the election of Gloria Molina as the first Latino(a) to serve on the powerful five-person Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Recent maneuvering at the city level will ensure significant representation of Latinos on the Los Angeles City Council, but not without considerable conflict between entrenched black and Latino City Council leaders.
over communities that are racially mixed. Los Angeles is a city in flux politically.

While it is clear that an emerging Latino majority will assume greater political power over time, the political empowerment process has left several portions of the Latino population behind. In particular, Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, who have a longer history there and are more likely to constitute greater portions of the voting-age citizen population, are the key recipients of the political spoils that have come in the Latino struggle for electoral power. All the elected officials to come into power as a consequence of these struggles are Mexican, and while they articulate a "Latino" perspective on the issues, they also tend to represent a narrow "Mexican" nationalism. The growing Central American population, which is residentially based in South Central Los Angeles and not in the traditional core of East Los Angeles, has not benefited for the most part from the political empowerment of Mexicans in Los Angeles. They are recent immigrants, not able to vote, and thus have become the pawns in negotiations with the county and city over the composition of political districts. Black and white politicians now represent districts with up to 50% of the population being Latino. But because they are unable to vote, a declining black or white population of 25% to 35% can maintain control over these districts without addressing the unique needs of a majority of the community. The upshot has been the political neglect of a growing community whose problems of poverty have been just as overlooked as those of the black poor.

This contrast was easily observed during the rebellion as traditional Mexican-American community leaders were either silent or negative toward the mass participation of Latinos in the rebellion. Those Latinos in South Central had little stake in the existing political and economic order while East Los Angeles was riding the crest of a successful struggle to incorporate their political demands into the electoral system. Just as the black community is divided into a middle and a working class that are connected to the system by way of their political and economic ties, the Latino community in Los Angeles is increasingly divided by income, ethnicity, and citizenship.

The second element necessary to understand the involvement of Latinos, particularly Central American and Mexican immigrants, in the rebellions is the existence of interethnic hostilities between these groups and Korean Americans. While much is made of African-American and Korean-American conflict, little is said about an equally and potentially more volatile conflict between Latinos and Koreans. While the crux of African-American and Korean-American conflict is based on the uneasy relationship between merchant and customer, the Latino-Korean conflict has the added dimensions of residential and workplace conflict. Latino involvement in the rebellion was most intense in Koreatown. Koreatown is an ethnic enclave demarcated by both the Korean control of businesses and a dwindling Korean residential presence. The community, in fact, is residentially mixed, with large portions of Latinos and Koreans. Latinos in this community come into contact with Koreans on multiple levels and, from all we know from current research, experience considerable hostility in each level. First, in terms of residence, Latinos complain of discrimination on the part of Korean landlords as buildings and apartments are rented according to racial background. Second, as customers in Korean establishments, Latinos complain of forms of disrespectful treatment similar to that about which black customers complain. Third, as employees in Korean small businesses, Latinos point to high levels of exploitation by their employers. Thus, in this context, it was not surprising to see the vehemence and anger that the Latino community in South Central Los Angeles expressed, especially toward the Korean community.

THE FEDERAL BLUEPRINT

How do we simultaneously deal with the seeds of the rebellion, as we have characterized them above, and rebuild the physical infrastructure of South Central Los Angeles? In attempting to answer this question, we shall limit the discussion here to the federal government's blueprint, as the local "Rebuild L.A." initiative remains somewhat vague in both scope and content.

Table 5 highlights the Bush administration's plan to revitalize the South Central Los Angeles community. In actuality, the main elements of the plan constitute what Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp termed, prior to the Los Angeles rebellion, his blueprint for a "Conservative War on Poverty."
Mr. Kemp promotes enterprise zones, as table 5 shows, as being the key to job creation and retention in the inner cities. He proposes to eliminate capital-gains taxes and reduce levies for business that will locate in specified inner-city areas. However, there is no history of success of such strategies in poor communities like South Central Los Angeles.

Moreover, recent research has indicated, as we noted earlier, that those white businesses in the inner city are especially reluctant to hire black males. Employer responses to a field survey in Chicago showed that they generally embrace the prevailing racial stereotypes about this group—that they are lazy, lack a good work ethic, are ineducable, and perhaps most important, dangerous.37

Couple this social reality with the fact that the major priorities for businesses when making locational decisions are access to markets, access to a quality labor force (code words for no blacks), infrastructure, and crime rates. These business factors are considered to be much more important in site selection than tax rates. And where enterprise zones have been successful, employers have brought their work force with them rather than employing community residents, or they have used these enterprise locations as warehouse points where there is a need for few workers.38

Secretary Kemp has had a long-term commitment to empowering the poor by making them homeowners—the theory being that individuals will have a stronger commitment to maintaining that which they own and to joining in other efforts to enhance their general neighborhood environment. Project HOPE, as it is called, would make home ownership affordable (table 5). This idea had languished in the Bush administration for the last four years, until the Los Angeles rebellion pushed it to center stage.39

However, this program would lock poor people into communities that are isolated, socially and economically, from mainstream employment and educational opportunities. And it would do nothing to expand the housing stock. Project HOPE is analogous to the reservation status provided to Native Americans in the government’s effort to empower them. As a result, in part, of their isolation over time, Native Americans currently have some of the highest rates of unemployment, alcoholism, and domestic abuse of any American ethnic or racial group.

The federal blueprint, as table 5 shows, also includes monies to give the poor, inner-city residents of South Central Los Angeles greater choice in deciding what school their children will attend. The encouragement of educational choice among public and private schools—using public dollars—needs to be carefully monitored. Although promoted as the solution to the crisis in public education, poor parents are at risk of being losers in a system where choice is “unchecked.” The much-heralded
Wisconsin Parental Choice Plan has achieved a modicum of success because this public/private initiative was carefully designed to meet the educational needs of poor children.

The Wisconsin legislature structured this plan to mandate that private educational providers develop their recruitment strategies and curricular offerings specifically to accommodate poor students. Since nonpoor youngsters already had a wide range of educational choice, it was appropriate that poor children—who are the least well served in our educational system—have their interests served. Educational choice should be driven by the needs of the poor if we are to revitalize education in inner cities.40

Finally, the Bush administration proposes to spend $500 million on a "Weed and Seed Program," which is designed to rid the community of the violent criminal element and to provide support for programs like Headstart and the Job Corps which are known to benefit the urban disadvantaged and their communities (table 5). As it is currently envisioned, however, the program places too much emphasis on the "weed" component and not enough on the "seed" component. Of the $500 million proposed for the program, only $109 million is targeted for "seed" programs like Headstart. With nearly 80% of the proposed funding targeted for the "weed" component, the primary goal of the program is, clearly, to continue the warehousing of large numbers of poor inner-city youth in the penal system.41

This, in our view, is a misplaced programmatic focus, as it is ever so clear that harsher jail and prison terms are not deterrents to crime in inner-city areas like South Central Los Angeles. What is needed in South Central Los Angeles, instead, is more "seed" money; to the extent that increased police power is deployed in South Central Los Angeles, it should be via a community policing construct where officers are on the street, interfacing with community residents prior to the commission of a crime.

We are, quite frankly, dubious of the so-called conservative war on poverty and, in particular, of its likely impact in South Central Los Angeles. The federal blueprint, and apparently the local "Rebuild L.A." initiative headed by Mr. Peter Ueberroth as well, is built on the central premise that, if the proper incentives are offered, the private sector will, in fact, play the leading role in the revitalization and redevelopment of South Central Los Angeles. We do not think this is going to happen for the reasons stated earlier: the types of governmental incentives currently under consideration in Washington are not high on private businesses' locational priority lists.

In view of these facts, and the social-science evidence is clear on the ineffectiveness of enterprise-zone legislation both in Britain and in 36 states in this country,42 we firmly believe that what is needed to rebuild South Central Los Angeles is a comprehensive public-works service-employment program, modeled on President Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration program of the 1930s. Jobs to rebuild the infrastructure of South Central Los Angeles can provide meaningful employment for the jobless in the community, including the hard-core disadvantaged, and can be linked to the skilled trades' apprenticeship-training programs.

To incorporate the hard-core disadvantaged into such a program would require a restructuring of the Private Industry Council's Job Training Partnership Act Program (JTPA). The program must dispense with its performance-based approach in training where funding is tied to job placement. This approach does not work for the hard-core disadvantaged because training agencies, under the current structure, have consistently engaged in creaming—recruiting the most "job-ready" segment of the inner-city population—to ensure their continued success and funding. Meanwhile, the hard-core unemployed have received scant attention and educational upgrading.43

We are now convinced that a WPA-type initiative, combined with a restructured JTPA program, will go a long way toward resolving the chronic jobless problem, especially among young males of color in the community, and toward rebuilding the infrastructure of South Central Los Angeles.

Such a program would have several goals that would enhance the social and economic viability of South Central Los Angeles. First, it would create meaningful jobs that could provide the jobless with skills transferable to the private sector. Second, it would rebuild a neglected infrastructure, making South Central Los Angeles an attractive place to locate for business and commerce. Finally, and most important, by reconnecting this isolated part of the city to the major arteries of transportation, by building a physical infrastructure that could support the social and cultural life of this richly
multicultural area (e.g., museums, public buildings, housing), and by enhancing the ability of community and educational institutions to educate and socialize the young, this plan would go far in providing a sustainable "public space" in the community. For it is our contention, that only when South Central Los Angeles is perceived as a public space that is economically vibrant and socially attractive will the promise of this multicultural community be fulfilled. Thus far, private-sector actions and federal-government programs and proposals have done nothing to bring us nearer to reaching this goal.

CONCLUSION
The fires have been extinguished in South Central Los Angeles and other cities, but the anger and rage continue to escalate, and they are likely to reemerge over time to the extent that the underlying political and economic causes are left to fester. While political, business, and civic leaders have rushed to advance old and new strategies and solutions to this latest urban explosion, much of what is being proposed is simply disjointed and/or déjà vu.

Clearly there is a need for additional money to resolve the underlying causes of this urban despair and devastation, but money alone is not enough. Government is constitutionally mandated to ensure "domestic tranquillity," but government alone cannot empower poor communities. And although blacks and other people of color have a special role and obligation to rebuild their neighborhoods because they are the majority of the victims and the vandals, they cannot solely assume this burden of responsibility.

What is needed, in our view, is a re conceptualization of problem solving where we meld together, and invest with full potential, those strategies offered from liberals and conservatives, from Democrats and Republicans, and from whites and people of color. Three cities (Milwaukee, Los Angeles, and Detroit, respectively) have served, individually and collectively, as urban laboratories where we have engaged in action research and proffered solutions to the urban problems which have generated violent outbursts.

The contentious state of police/minority-community relations has served as the linchpin of urban unrest in each instance. While relations have improved in several large cities in recent years, the Los Angeles Police Department has been frozen in time. Black and Hispanic males have been particularly brutalized in their encounters with police, the majority of whom are white males. But more disconcerting is the fact that poor, central-city minority communities have become more crime-ridden of late. Thus, minorities find themselves in the ambiguous situation of needing greater police service on the one hand and protection from the excesses of those same services on the other. This contradictory situation has kept relations between these groups at a race/class boiling point.

More police officers are desperately needed in high-crime communities that are disproportionately populated by the poor. Local, state, and federal dollars (federal funds for this initiative are in the crime bill before Congress) need to be allocated quickly toward this end. At present, violent felons are beginning to outnumber police officers in many of our urban centers.44 As we noted previously, this increase in police power should be deployed via a community policing program. Such an effort can serve to control minor offenses and to build trust between police and community residents. Community policing has evidenced positive results in Detroit and Philadelphia and is showing encouraging signs in Milwaukee and numerous other large and small cities. In addition, the intensive recruitment of minority officers and specific, ongoing (and evaluated) diversity training will further reduce police/minority community tensions. But most important in this effort is enlightened, decisive leadership from the office of the chief, a position of abysmal failure in Los Angeles.

The national administration's initial response to the rebellion was to blame it on deficiencies among the urban poor, particularly on the supposed lack of "family values" and the predominance of female-headed households.45 This jaundiced view ignores the real sources of the conflict and concentrates instead on the symptomatology of growing up in concentrated-poverty communities where the social resources and assistance necessary to negotiate mainstream society successfully are either totally lacking or insufficient.46 Thus, the policy implication that needs to be drawn from the rebellion is that, in order to bring the poor and disenfranchised into mainstream society, in order to enhance their acceptance of personal responsibility, and in order to pro-
mote personal values consistent with those of the wider society, we must find a way to provide a comprehensive program of meaningful assistance to this population. But clearly, a change in personal values alone, as suggested by some right-wing analysts, will not substitute for job training, job creation, and the removal of racial stereotypes and discrimination. The spatial concentration of contemporary poverty presents significant challenges to policy makers and human-service providers alike. Although numerous programs and initiatives have been instituted to combat these problems, they suffer from three important weaknesses.

First, there is a lack of coordination among programs aimed at improving the life chances of citizens in poor communities. Second, no systematic steps have been taken to evaluate existing efforts, to ensure that the programs are effectively targeting the "hardest to serve," adults with low skills and limited work history, and youth who are teen parents or school dropouts. Third, there is no comprehensive strategy for planning future resource allocations as needs change and as these communities expand in size.

A recent national study of training and employment programs, under the Job Training Partnership Act, revealed that little has been done to address the remedial educational needs of high-school drop-outs and that those with the greatest need for training and employment services are not targeted. However, overcoming these and other program weaknesses is not sufficient to solve these complex problems. A strategic plan is needed to alleviate the social ills associated with concentrated poverty.

There is a need to conduct a comprehensive inventory of agencies and institutions that provide services to populations in poverty areas. We also need to assess and evaluate the service providers' performance in an attempt to identify strengths, weaknesses, and missing links in their service-delivery systems. On the basis of these findings, a strategy should be devised for a more effective and coordinated use of existing resources and for generating new resources to address unmet needs. Finally, we need to propose a plan of action that would encourage development in the 1990s that links together the various program initiatives.

And, most important, representatives of the affected ethnic and racial groups must be in key decision-making roles if these efforts are to achieve success. Citizens of color, individually and through their community, civic and religious institutions, bear a responsibility to promote positive values and lifestyles in their communities and to socialize their youth into the mainstream. But they cannot do this alone.

They cannot be held accountable for the massive plant closings, disinvestments, and exportation of jobs from our urban centers to Third World countries. There must be an equality in status, responsibility, and authority across race and class lines if we are to resolve our urban crises. Government, in a bipartisan fashion, must direct its resources to those programs determined to be successful with the poor; the poor must be permitted to participate in the design of programs for their benefit, and society at all levels must embrace personal responsibility and a commitment to race and gender equity.

How likely are these reforms to be implemented? If one were to analyze the prospects of these changes from the perspective offered in this paper, the answer would not be an optimistic one. However, an important consequence of the rebellion was to shake the very foundation of the taken-for-granted quality of our discourse and practice about race and class in American society. It opens up the opportunity for reassessing positions, organizing constituencies, and collectively engaging issues that have been buried from sight until now. Given these new openings, the Los Angeles urban rebellion of 1992 gives us all the opportunity to work on building a society in which "we can all get along."

Notes

4. See, for example, Jolene Kirschman and Kathryn Neckerman, "We'd Love to Hire Them But . . . . The Meaning of Race For Employers," The Urban Underclass, ed. Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson (Washington, DC: The Brookings


7. See Oliver and Johnson, "Interethnic Conflict in an Urban Ghetto," and Johnson and Oliver, "Interethnic Minority Conflict in Urban America."


9. See Farrell, Johnson, and Jones, "Field Notes.


16. See Johnson and Oliver, "Economic Restructuring and Black Male Joblessness."


20. These statistics for the years 1982–1989 were extracted from The Duw Center’s Plant Shutdowns Monitor Directory (Oakland, CA: The Data Center, 1978–1982).


24. See Johnson and Oliver, "Economic Restructuring and Black Male Joblessness."


27. George Ramos and Tracy Wilkinson, "Unrest


33. See Kwong, "The First Multicultural Riots."

34. In focus groups conducted immediately following the rebellion, Spanish-speaking, mostly immigrant respondents spoke eloquently of their interactions with Koreans in terms of housing, business, and work. While none of the participants condoned the violence, and only one respondent admitted participating in the looting, many expressed in graphic terms incidents of being harassed by Korean-American shopkeepers because of the assumption they would steal, or of being turned down for housing because the Korean-American landlord wanted to keep the apartment complex all Korean-American, or of being forced to work overtime for a Korean-American employer. This form of interethnic conflict has rarely surfaced, but we believe it is central to understanding the multi-ethnic character of the L.A. rebellion.


37. See Kirschman and Necker, "We'd Love to Hire Them But ... ."


42. See Osborne, "The Kemp Cure-All."


The Social Movement as a Unique Collective Phenomenon


As the second millennium ended and the third commenced, historians and journalists provided insightful accounts of the great strides made in technology, science, medicine, transportation, and communication during the twentieth century.¹ Hosts of game shows, creators of documentaries, and pundits on news shows asked participants to name the most influential invention of the twentieth century. Responses ranged from the automobile, airplane, and computer to the telephone, television, and antibiotics. Perhaps the correct answer was “all of the above.” In the short span of a single century, the world became a global village and humans walked on the moon, but bloody military conflicts and “ethnic cleansing” claimed the lives of millions and ideological struggles brought the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation.

Those who lived during the twentieth century moved rapidly from a machine age to a nuclear age, a space age, and an electronic age fueled by tiny microchips. But this century could just as easily have been called the age of the social movement. Accounts of the twentieth century have readily acknowledged the influences social movements (many carried over from the nineteenth century) had on U.S. society and a large portion of the world. African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans, women, gays and lesbians, college students, prison inmates, and workers from the vineyard to the university campus struggled for constitutional and human rights, equality, justice, identity, and a share of the American dream. Some formed consciousness raising groups to share common concerns, to strive for equal opportunities, and to enhance self-esteem while others formed heavily armed militias to defend themselves against the encroachment of the federal government and other societal elements that threatened their world.

Social movements organized during the twentieth century to end military conflicts, to protect the environment, to prevent the construction of nuclear power plants, to limit violence and sex on television and the Internet, to end apartheid in South Africa, to gain rights for animals, to halt legalized abortion, to legalize marijuana, and to reduce the power of corporate, governmental, religious, and educational bureaucracies. The growing conflict over moral, religious, social, political, and economic values, beliefs, and attitudes fueled social movements on the left and the right. And for every movement created to bring about change, a counter-movement arose to confront the dissatisfied and to sustain the social order. But just as the nineteenth century passed along unfulfilled dreams and agendas of social movements, the twentieth century has passed to the twenty-first century struggles for justice and equality, protection and prohibition, values and attitudes.

Theorists have used the label movement to identify all forces for and against change. This label has encompassed internal changes within
established institutions and groups, protest organizations, campaigns, uprisings, acts of violence, revolutions, civil wars, trends, fads, and crazes. When theorists wanted to recognize differences among these phenomena, they sometimes attached modifiers such as social, political, religious, historical, rhetorical, reform, nationalistic, and individualistic. People who were suspicious or fearful of movements called them radical, violent, revolutionary, repressive, and fanatical. Many groups compounded this confusion by calling themselves "movements" to inflate perceptions of their size, importance, and influence.2

This book focuses on the persuasive efforts of a unique collective phenomenon designed to bring about or resist change. It is essential to determine if a phenomenon under investigation is a social movement or a portion of a social movement, such as a social movement organization or campaign. This chapter identifies the essential characteristics of social movements and contrasts social movements with other collective phenomena such as political parties, established institutions, advertising campaigns, lobby or special interest groups, civil wars, and revolutions.

An Organized Collectivity

A social movement is at least minimally organized. If we cannot identify leaders or spokespersons, members or followers, and organizations or coalitions, the phenomenon under investigation is a trend, fad, or unorganized protest, not a social movement.3 A phenomenon of the early 1990s called the men's movement—in which groups of men attended weekend retreats, sweated around fires in teepees, poured out their hearts, and sought comfort in brotherhood—has never quite developed into an organized social movement. There are no organizations, no recognizable leaders (other than poets and writers), and no identifiable membership.4 On the other hand, the concern over clothing made in sweatshop conditions first surfaced in the late 1990s in labor union literature, within human rights organizations, and on television talk shows. It remained beneath the consciousness of most U.S. citizens until the winter and spring of 2000. Students and faculty on college campuses around the country formed local organizations and demanded that their institutions become members of the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), a coalition of universities, labor unions, and human rights groups created to investigate and take actions against human rights abuses. A major target was university apparel produced in sweatshops from which universities received a portion of the profits. Student-led groups brought pressure on administrations to create codes of conduct for manufacturers and to join the WRC. They employed Web sites, leaflets, symbolic actions, demonstrations, sit-ins, tent cities, and hunger strikes.5

Degrees of Organization

The degree of organization, visibility of leaders, and nature of membership varies from movement to movement. For instance, Martin Luther King, Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Stokely Carmichael of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were highly visible leaders of the civil rights movement. Although it would be difficult for most of us to name a leader or organization of the gay rights, animal rights, or pro-choice movements, they do

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exist, have sizable memberships, and are essential for the continuing existence and progress of each social movement. Leaders, members, and organizations that stage frequent public demonstrations and media events—such as pro-life’s National Right to Life Committee and environmentalism’s Greenpeace—are more visible than ones that operate primarily through the courts, in small groups, or within the social movement community such as the Sierra Club or the Humane Society of the United States. Regardless, all must have at least minimal organization to qualify as social movements.

The mass media may create the illusion of a social movement by treating “relatively isolated, but similar, rhetorical situations throughout the nation . . . as a single, dynamic, and interrelated phenomenon.” For example, the “death of God theology” attracted a great deal of media coverage and attention of religious leaders in the 1970s and 1980s and appeared to be a thriving social movement when no leadership, membership, or organization existed. A similar phenomenon, the “secular humanist conspiracy,” attracted a great deal of attention in the 1980s and 1990s from Christian fundamentalists and political conservatives who saw it as a powerful, demonic social movement responsible for the moral decline of the United States. However, the secular changes occurring in the United States and elsewhere appear to be decades-old trends rather than the results of a well-organized Secular Humanist social movement. There is no evidence of organizations, leaders, or demonstrations. There are no campaigns urging teenagers to have sex, athletes to use drugs, husbands and wives to divorce, women to substitute the workplace for the home place, or God-fearing people to stop attending churches, temples, and mosques. A trend indicating an alteration of norms and values is not the equivalent of a social movement.

Social Movement Campaigns

Social movements are often confused with campaigns because social movements conduct numerous campaigns to achieve specific goals. For instance, Operation Rescue has conducted campaigns to close down abortion clinics in targeted cities around the country and to clog the jails with arrested demonstrators so police will be unable to disrupt their sit-ins and blockades. Earth First! has conducted campaigns to stop the logging of redwoods in the northwest, often by sitting in the tops of giant trees, lying in front of bulldozers, driving spike nails into trees, or sabotaging equipment. Although campaigns and social movements share similarities, they have significant differences.

Social movements tend to be organized from the bottom up while campaigns tend to be organized from the top down. A social movement leader usually rises from a protest group as it develops and sees the need for leadership. It is an evolutionary process in which an effective spokesperson who can articulate the fundamentals of the cause often emerges as a leader. On the other hand, a campaign leader is usually selected by an organization prior to the start of the campaign and then selects and organizes a staff to run the campaign. Campaigns typically have managers with assigned roles, organizational charts, chiefs of staff, schedules of operations, specific goals, budgets, and known end points such as Election Day, an anniversary celebration, or date when a fund or membership drive is to “go over the top.” For instance, Native American leaders organize protests when the Atlanta Braves or Washington Redskins play in the World Series or playoffs. The demonstrators demand that these teams stop employing what they see as offensive, racist nicknames, “sham rituals and ridiculous impersonations.” Similarly, animal rights activists
picket Macy's and other department stores that sell fur coats, particularly during the Christmas holiday season. But these protest campaigns end when the sports event or the holiday season ends. By contrast, the Native American and animal rights social movements have lasted for decades, changed as circumstances have changed, rarely maintained tight control over memberships, and altered or added goals as they have proceeded.13 No social movement knows when or if it will achieve its ends.

Social Movement Organizations

Specific organizations are often confused with social movements. The National Organization for Women (NOW), the American Indian Movement (AIM), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and White Aryan Resistance (WAR) are organizations within social movements, not social movements in themselves. Each is one organization striving for equality for women, Native American rights and dignity, humane treatment of wild and domestic animals, and preservation of a way of life and the so-called Aryan race. To understand fully the persuasive efforts of the animal rights movement, for example, you need to study the messages and symbolic actions of several organizations within the movement, including Friends for Animals, the Animal Protection Institute of America, Beauty Without Cruelty International, Trans-Species Unlimited, the Animal Welfare Institute, Humans Against Rabbit Exploitation (HARE), and PETA. Thus, while one or more organizations are an essential component of social movements, a single organization is not synonymous with the whole movement.

Minimal organization is characteristic of social movements. Many never evolve to high levels of organization. Unlike campaigns, they do not proceed in orderly step-by-step fashion, contain one supreme leader who controls the organization, appeal to a single target audience, have carefully defined and identifiable membership, or strive to attain a single, well-defined goal through the employment of one persuasive strategy. In the late 1990s, the Promise Keepers held large rallies of men in sports stadiums promising to be strong heads of their households and good fathers and husbands, but only time will tell whether they were part of the fledgling men’s movement or merely a series of rallies that ended after a few years.14 The same is true of the "Million Man March" in Washington, D.C. on October 16, 1995.15 There appears to be no membership or organizational commitment by those attending rallies, merely pledges to be better persons, sons, fathers, and husbands when they return home. However, personal reform has been an important element of such movements as temperance and antismoking. Similarly, only time will tell whether the "Million Mom March" in Washington, D.C. on Mother’s Day, May 14, 2000 demanding "sensible gun laws" and an end to gun violence will flower into a social movement or remain a one-day protest.16

An Uninstitutionalized Collectivity

A social movement is an uninstitutionalized collectivity. No social movement or social movement organization is part of an established order that governs, maintains, or changes social, political, religious, or economic norms and values.17 Movements by the Southern Baptist Convention to recommit the denomination to the inerrancy of the Bible, by members of the House of Representatives to impeach President Clinton, by banks to consolidate with other banks, by Democrats to recount the Florida 2000 presidential vote, or by the Teamster’s Union to get a better
contract with United Parcel Service are not social movements. Rather, they are established institutions changing themselves and striving for goals through institutionalized means and procedures. Primary impetus for change comes from within rather than from without and only recognized members have a say in the change.

To understand the persuasive efforts of complex social movements, observers have often presumed they are little different from the activities of political parties, political action committees (PACs), legislatures, legislative lobbies, religious organizations, and corporations. But an essential difference is that social movements exist and operate primarily from outside established institutions. Although social movements may attempt to persuade members of established institutions (legislators, governors, judges, bishops, trustees, industrialists, college presidents) to support or resist programs for change, they cease to be social movements if they become parts of institutions. For instance, the Lutheran Church was once a social movement in Germany, but it later became the official church of Germany and a recognized religious denomination around the world. The American Federation of Labor was an organization within the American labor movement until it attained the legal right to represent workers in collective bargaining and grievances and achieved institutional status.

**Social Movements as Out-Groups**

The outsider or uninstitutionalized status of social movements, according to Simons and others, presents leaders with “extraordinary rhetorical dilemmas” in the rhetorical requirements they must fulfill, the problems they will face, and the available strategies they may use to meet these requirements. Although success is never assured in any persuasive undertaking, a comparison of the persuasive situations uninstitutionalized social movements and institutionalized organizations face suggests that social movements encounter unique requirements and handicaps.

Social movements are always out-groups that society views as illegitimate. They are criticized for not handling conflicts and controversies through normal, proper channels and procedures, even when those channels and procedures are systematically denied them. Social movements have virtually no powers of reward and punishment beyond disruptions and personal recognition or expulsion, and expulsion may lead the exiled or disillusioned to create organizations. They have neither legislative nor enforcement powers—nor any assured means of financial support. Mone
tary funds are fractions of those available to established governments, churches, political parties, PACs, and corporations.

Uninstitutionalized leaders survive only as long as they perform necessary tasks well. When new tasks, abilities, or strategies are required, movement organizations may unceremoniously discard the old. Leaders have minimal control over single factions or fragile coalitions of movement organizations, and none over important institutions such as courts, investigative agencies, boards of trustees, and media. Rarely can they bring most of a social movement’s resources to bear on a single event, let alone a lengthy campaign.

The mass media who must cater to viewers and readers, government agencies, advertisers, and owners devote little space or air time to social movements. News reports are rarely favorable toward movements (unless success appears near or an element is becoming institutionalized), are rarely controlled by social movements (although some movement organizations and leaders become adept at manipulating the media to
attain coverage), and provide exposure only when a social movement does something spectacular or stupid. The need for media attention may drive an organization to ever more extreme proclamations and actions. Social movement organizations rarely have the money to purchase significant space or air time to present their cases directly to the people. A single presidential candidate may generate and spend more money in a few months than a social movement will in decades. Persuasion is the sole means available to most social movements to accomplish such functions as transforming perceptions of reality, attaining a modicum of legitimacy, and mobilizing the discontented. Limited funds relegate most persuasion to leaflets, pamphlets and, increasingly, the Internet.

**Institutions as In-Groups**

Institutionalized groups and leaders, on the other hand, are always in the *in-group*; society views them as legitimate agents for sustaining the social order. Leaders strive to maintain the appearance of dealing with conflicts and controversies through normal, proper channels. Institutions have immense powers of reward and punishment because they control the procedures that populate the agencies that enforce the law, investigate crime and misbehavior, regulate the media and commerce, create and discard laws, levy and collect taxes, conduct trials, operate the prisons, and appoint persons to lucrative positions in government, church, bureaucracy, and corporation. They may keep the disgruntled in line by enhancing or diminishing their economic well-being, threatening their membership status, amending or burying pieces of legislation, and granting or withholding contracts and licenses.

Institutional leaders may serve guaranteed terms (ranging from two years to life), enjoy the support of organized and well-financed groups, and advance within corporate, political, educational, and church hierarchies. Funding is far less of a problem for institutionalized groups and individuals. Legislatures have access to billions of tax dollars. PACs can raise millions of dollars through sophisticated computerized mailings. Lobbies such as the National Rifle Association fund the increasingly expensive political campaigns of sympathetic legislators and executives. Large corporations such as Mobil Oil and Georgia Pacific have vast financial resources and influence to counter environmentalists. Political candidates, both challengers and incumbents, generate enormous campaign chests, often collecting millions of dollars at a single fundraiser.

Institutionalized groups and leaders are newsworthy and demand media attention. They command network, cable, and front-page coverage for trivial as well as consequential speeches, press conferences, conventions, announcements, meetings of stockholders or bishops, ceremonies or events. C-SPAN channels give continuous coverage of Congress, press conferences, speeches by institutional leaders, and interviews with those who aspire to become institutional leaders. Television interview and talk shows such as *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, and *Larry King Live* provide leaders with opportunities to defend themselves, attack others, present programs, and build their images. Few social movement leaders appear on such programs. The president's cat or dog may attract more news coverage than a social movement demonstration by thousands. The president may gain international attention by strolling through the White House rose garden, attending the annual Easter egg hunt on the south lawn, or traveling to a foreign country.
At the same time, institutions may stifle uncooperative or unfriendly media outlets by threatening not to provide their representatives with seats on campaign planes, access to leaders, entry into restricted areas, or opportunities to ask questions at press conferences. All major networks, cable channels, newspapers, and magazines are owned by institutional groups and individuals devoted, with few exceptions, to maintaining their versions of social norms and values and making a profit. Support of social movements is likely to be minimal and implicit rather than explicit. No social movement has the connections, funds, and access to the media enjoyed by institutions and institutionalized leaders.

A Large Collectivity

Social movements are large in scope in terms of geographical area, time, events, organizations, participants, goals, strategies, and critical adaptations. Scope distinguishes them from pressure groups, religious cults, lobbies, PACs, campaigns, and protests that tend to be of relatively short duration, have limited goals, and restrict membership to a small number of true believers, staff, or operatives.

Although campaigns may follow rhetorical careers similar to social movements, it does not follow, as Donald Fishman argues, that “it is fair to conclude that whatever differences that exist between movements and campaigns may not be rhetorically significant.” A campaign is to a social movement as a battle is to a war. They are similar in some ways but very different in others. Conducting the battle of Gettysburg was not the same as conducting the Civil War, and understanding the battle does not fully inform us about the war. Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, discovered that conducting limited and highly focused campaigns in Montgomery, Selma, Atlanta, and Chicago was not the same as attempting to maintain attention, cohesion, commitment, control, and excitement within a large social movement over many years. He had to adjust rhetorically to temporal and societal changes, new generations of protestors, internal and external challenges, regional differences, the need for and appearance of new strategies, a rising militancy within the movement, and growing frustrations with lack of real victories and changes. Unlike campaigns, social movements are typically national or international in scope, sustain efforts for decades, select many leaders, create many organizations, conduct continuous membership drives, carry out many campaigns, expand and constrict ideologies, set and alter many goals, and employ a wide variety of strategies. It is difficult to imagine a “campaign” that would pose such rhetorical challenges to leaders and members alike.

Size

Size of membership and scope of activities are integral portions of social movement efforts to persuade others to join and give, establish their legitimacy, and to pressure institutions and adversaries to take them and their demands seriously. Social movements in the United States cannot thrive if they are perceived to be small because Americans tend to see small ventures as either inconsequential, and therefore to be ignored or ridiculed, or as dangerous, and therefore to be suppressed for the safety of the people and the good of the nation.

Oliver and Marwell note “One person marching for a thousand hours is not the same as a thousand people marching for one hour.” Institutions and their supporters went to great lengths in the 1960s and 1970s to
characterize the antiwar, student rights, and black power movements as small groups of radicals, sex perverts, traitors, cowards, racists, and degenerates—people not representative of the great "silent majority" of citizens, students, and African Americans. Conservative talk show personality Rush Limbaugh has coined the epithet "feminazi" to characterize women's rights advocates as a small group of radicals out of step with the vast majority of women in the United States. Political cartoonists have portrayed militia organizations formed in the 1990s as small populations of uneducated, unintelligent, overweight, unshaven, paranoid, trailer-park residents who play soldier on the weekends and assume exalted military ranks.

The Native American movement—relatively small in number, isolated in scattered, remote regions of the country, and ideologically split between urban and reservation residents—experienced difficulty in attracting attention, maintaining media and governmental interest, and persuading audiences to take it seriously. It resorted to takeovers of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, Wounded Knee in South Dakota, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. to gain attention for its cause. The media and the public soon grew tired of the occupations and ignored them while the Wall Street Journal dismissed the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as "an exercise in playacting—an effort by a relative handful of militants to speak for the broader Indian community." The recent establishment of lucrative gambling casinos on reservation lands in such states as Wisconsin and New York, successful court cases to reclaim land lost a century or more ago, and a whale hunt off the west coast in 1999 have captured more media and public attention than years of protest and demonstrations.

Forces on both sides of the abortion conflict have portrayed the other as a vocal minority, little more than a handful of radicals wishing to force their will on the majority. Virtually every social movement claims to be a "great grassroots movement." Whenever social movements stage "mass demonstrations," institutional and movement estimates of turnout vary drastically because each side has a stake in the size game. A survey that found only 1 percent of men considered themselves to be exclusively homosexual (contrary to the long-standing claim of 10 percent) prompted Time magazine to headline a report, "The Shrinking Ten Percent: A New Survey Claiming that Only 1 percent of Men Are Gay Put the Movement Off Stride."

Time

Most significant changes in social structures, norms, and values take decades, if not centuries, to bring about, so institutions have time on their side. They may wait until a social, economic, or political crisis passes; a war ends; protesters graduate or become disillusioned by lack of progress; or the impact of a movement campaign lessens. For instance, in the early 1990s, the animal rights campaign against wearing fur had forced many women to stop wearing and purchasing fur and resulted in a sharp decline in sales and profits. Many furriers closed for lack of business. By 2000, however, fur was making a comeback with brisk sales and new furriers opened for business. Women no longer feared that animal rights activists might harass them nor were they deterred by thoughts of innocent animals giving their lives for stylish, expensive garments.

Institutional leadership changes occurring through normal processes such as election, retirement, resignation, or discharge may remove favor-
ite targets of agitators. President Johnson's decision not to run for re-election in 1968 and the end of President Clinton's second term in 2001 deprived antiwar and Christian right enthusiasts of favorite nemeses. The public may become disenchanted with and intolerant of protest and disorder, particularly if their routines such as travel, shopping, entertainment, and work are affected. The mass media and their audiences become bored with issues, events, and strategies (particularly boycotts and takeovers) that seem to drag on endlessly. A person may refrain for a while from buying lettuce to support the farm workers movement, or taking children to Disney World to oppose gay and lesbian rights, or crossing a picket line to avoid a confrontation with environmental protesters, but desires and convenience may overcome commitment or reluctance.

Time directly affects social movements. Changes in movement leadership resulting from power struggles, deaths, or assassinations may weaken social movements or lead to the dissolution of social movement organizations. Leaders and followers may grow weary of the struggle or become disillusioned by lack of real progress. A great victory for one generation of protestors, such as the Montgomery bus boycott that energized the civil rights movement and brought a young Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to national prominence, may mean little to the next generation that wants true equality in all aspects of life. 27 If social movement leaders and followers do not tire of the struggle, they or factions may become desperate for victory and resort to extreme methods such as violence and assassination that allow institutions and countermovements to suppress or discredit them as fanatical and dangerous.

Events

A few victories, campaigns, or events do not guarantee success. Even spectacular events such as the 1963 civil rights march on Washington, D.C. that drew over 250,000 persons and ended with Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech are soon forgotten. What happened to the men's movement after the "million man" rally in Washington? Friend and foe ask "What's next?" Social movements and the media have insatiable appetites for "happenings," but few social movements have sufficient leaders, members, funds, or energy to satisfy these appetites wisely over long periods of time while fending off counterefforts of other movements and institutions.

The radical environmental group Earth First! employed every tactic it could copy and invent during the 1980s and 1990s to defend Mother Earth from the logging industry and those who would pollute her streams and eliminate her wildlife. Earth Firsters used "guerrilla" theater, nonviolent civil disobedience, confrontations, destruction of property and machinery (called monkeywrenching, ecotage, or ecodfense), cemented themselves into roadblocks, chained themselves to trees and logging equipment, sat in the top of trees for months at a time, dropped a three-hundred-foot roll of black plastic from the top of the Glen Canyon Dam to simulate a catastrophic crack in the dam, and draped a huge banner across the face of George Washington on Mount Rushmore reading, "We The People Say No to Acid Rain." 28 Several protesters were seriously injured or killed in accidents with trucks and bulldozers during confrontations. Yet its efforts and name have largely disappeared from the media. Logging, development, and pollution in the northwest have continued. Julia Hill, a member of Earth First!, took residence on a six-by-eight foot wooden platform at the top of a 180 foot redwood tree she called Luna in
December 1997. A year later her protest, largely ignored except for Pacific Lumber that wanted to cut down the tree, garnered a picture and a single column in People magazine. This is little attention for the personal sacrifice made for the movement, but it is more than most prolonged protests get in the media. When Hill finally descended from her treetop platform in late 1999 after an agreement to save Luna and some other trees, few people took notice.

**Promotes or Opposes Change in Societal Norms and Values**

A social movement promotes or opposes a program for change in societal norms and values. Its rhetoric includes prescriptions for what must be done, who must do it, and how it must be done.

**Basic Types of Social Movements**

Three general types of social movements are distinguishable by the nature of the changes they advocate or oppose. An innovative social movement seeks to replace existing norms and values with new ones. Innovative movements include women's liberation, civil rights for African Americans, socialism, gay liberation, and animal rights. A revivalistic social movement seeks to replace existing norms and values with ones from a venerable, idealized past. Revivalistic social movements include the Native American, Back to Africa, pro-life, environmental, and Christian reconstruction movements. A resistance social movement seeks to block changes in norms and values because it perceives nothing wrong with the status quo, at least nothing that cannot or will not be resolved in due time through established means and institutions. Resistance social movements include anti-women's liberation, anti-civil rights, antigay rights, Aryan superiority, and pro-choice movements.

Social movements tend to be both valuistic and normative because changes in values alter norms, and changes in norms alter values. For instance, movements espousing the values of equality, fairness, and justice led to normative changes through court decisions and laws. These normative changes guaranteed equal pay, benefits, and employment opportunities for African Americans, women, and senior citizens. In turn, these changes affected how Americans perceive the values of equality, fairness, and justice. They generated opposition by those who see such changes as threats to other values.

**Reform and Revolutionary Movements**

Many social movements have reform-oriented (demanding partial change) and revolutionary-oriented (demanding total change) elements. Their ideologies, leaders, members, and organizations develop and change over time. The student movement, for example, began in the 1950s as a reform-oriented free speech movement at U.S. universities that had traditionally restricted who could speak, to whom they could speak, when they could speak, and where they could speak on campuses. The movement evolved into demands not only for removal of strictures on speakers but the elimination of restrictions on where students could live, the hours they could stay out at night, and the clothes they could wear. Students wanted to serve on important committees that affected their educations and well-being. They argued for the creation of grievance,
grade appeal, and student affairs committees that would empower them to address unfair treatment. Eventually, on some campuses, the movement became revolutionary with demands that students determine courses offered, course content, course requirements, graduation standards, appointments of administrators, and investment of endowments.33

Efforts to place a social movement along a reform-to-revolution continuum depend on time, perceptions, and elements ascendant within the movement. For instance, many Americans viewed Martin Luther King, Jr. as a revolutionary until Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown became leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and preached black power. Suddenly the Reverend King appeared to be a reformer. Some view the animal rights movement as merely a reform movement aimed at assuring the humane treatment of animals, a simple extension of the animal welfare movement of the nineteenth century from which the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) emerged. Others see this movement as a revolutionary attempt to alter the relationships between animals and humans and thus between humans and God, to restrict the rights of hunters and those who raise animals for food, to stifle lifesaving medical experimentation, or to increase the intrusion of big government into American lives.

**Moderate and Radical Movements**

Labeling a movement as moderate or radical may be as misleading as labeling it reform or revolutionary. While one person’s moderate is another’s radical, most social movements contain both radical and moderate elements. Organizations of the women’s liberation movement have ranged from the National Organization for Women to the Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH) and the Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM). Elements within the pro-life movement include those who believe change must come about through prayer and peaceful protest and those who believe violence and assassination are essential to ending legal abortion and stopping the slaughter of the innocents. Terms such as moderate and radical best describe types of strategies and arguments rather than types of social movements, a point we will emphasize in later chapters.

**Ideologies and Belief-Systems**

The natures of social movement ideologies or systems of belief preclude precise classification. They tend to be strange mixtures of vagueness and precision, part of an old and part of a new system, static and ever changing, consistent and contradictory. Some social movements have one ideology for true believers and a somewhat different one for public consumption. As Hans Toch writes, “Each person joins a somewhat different social movement, often for reasons far removed from the central concerns of the movement.”

Elements of society, including those who join, perceive a social movement’s demands, goals, strategies, and potential outcomes from their unique personal perspectives and needs. A campaign to protest the development of a large resort at the edge of a national park may attract persons wanting to save the environment, persons desiring to protect a pristine wilderness for their children or future generations, persons seeking to protect their nearby ranches or a favorite hunting area, persons opposing development by large corporations, and persons wanting the fellowship of the protest group.
The diversity, flexibility, and fluid nature of social movement belief systems or programs for change set them apart from other collectives. Most religious, political, social, and pressure groups have a single set of principles that remain relatively constant and goals that are fairly precise: convert unbelievers, elect a party’s candidate, maintain subsidies for milk producers, institute prayer in the public schools, or prevent gun control legislation. In contrast, even a fairly focused social movement such as pro-life has a wide variety of organizations that espouse positions ranging from no abortions under any circumstances to some abortions in particular situations (incest, rape, danger to mother’s health), strategies ranging from prayer and legal action to violence, and goals ranging from protection of the unborn to protection of the unborn, disabled, infirm, and aged.

Local issues, what Steven Goldzwig calls “critical localism,” may dominate the concerns, rhetoric, and demonstrations in a community or on a college campus. For example, a large tuition increase and the firing of the student editor of the campus daily newspaper for printing editorials that included expletives fueled large demonstrations, fiery rhetoric, and arrests on the Purdue University campus in the 1960s and 1970s. The press reported these as countercultural and anti-Vietnam war movement incidents even though these issues played insignificant parts in each incident. However, it is unlikely either incident would have come about without a climate conducive to protest—the result of a number of larger movements on campus. As Goldzwig and Patricia Sullivan write, “In these local discursive performances cultural history and local experience help shape beliefs and attitudes; they meld together an epistemological outlook that authorizes an additional move.”

**Encounters Opposition in a Moral Struggle**

Whether a social movement’s leaders and members are striving to bring about or resist change in norms and values and whether these changes pertain to people (right to life or right to die), things (nuclear weapons or alcoholic beverages), or animals (medical experiments or fur coats), they assume the power to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, and ethical from unethical motives, purposes, characters, choices, strategies, and actions. Each social movement believes that it alone constitutes an ethical, virtuous, principled, and righteous force with a moral obligation it cannot ignore. The movement must raise the consciousness of the people by revealing the moral, intellectual, and coercive bankruptcy of the targeted institution, its actions, and its motives. Kenneth Burke and Leland Griffin conclude “all social movements are essentially moral strivings for salvation, perfection, the good.”

**Claim to Legitimacy**

The moral stance and tone of social movement rhetoric is of critical importance to claims of legitimacy as uninstitutionalized forces. Anthony Oberschall writes that a movement’s legitimacy rests on an elaboration of systems of belief and moral ideas, while Herbert Simons notes that a movement establishes its legitimacy by representing its cause as one that any virtuous individual may endorse. A PETA leaflet states the case for their claim to the moral high ground.

All species fear injury and death, and all species fight for life and freedom. How can one species, ours, consider it has the right to deny others their basic interests of liberty and life? Just as we denied these
rights to other human beings in the past for arbitrary reasons, such as skin color, we now deny these basic rights to others because they happen not to be of our own species.

We do not need animals’ fur, skin or flesh to survive. But we have come to like the feel, look and taste of these pieces of animals and we are loathe to give them up, even though to do so means a healthier existence for us all.

What gives human beings the right to kill other animals who have lives of their own to live?

Truly, history will judge the worth of our “civilization” less by our technological accomplishments than by the way we treat our fellow beings. 40

As with most individuals and collectives who place themselves upon a moral pedestal, particularly ones striving for the mantle of legitimacy, social movement rhetoric often magnifies its righteousness. Delegates to the 1900 American Federation of Labor convention were welcomed with these words:

Upon you rests the dawn of a new century, and may the record made here shine forth during the years to come as does now the Declaration of Independence. Your work is a noble and holy one, and when accomplished will be but the realization of the Savior’s mission on earth — the uplifting and elevation morally and socially of all humanity. 41

Herbert Simons, Elizabeth Mechling, and Howard Schrader note that “Most ideological messages” of social movements “tend to exaggerate the strength, unity, and intellectual and moral legitimacy of the movement.” 42

Disaffection and Confrontation

As a social movement promotes or resists a program for change from a moral perspective and lays claim to legitimacy, members become frustrated to the point of disaffection with established institutions and institutional means of change and control. They become willing to devote their lives, and on occasion to give their lives, to attain victory in the moral struggle between good and evil. Innovative and revitalistic social movements see institutions as unaware of, disinterested in, or openly resistant to necessary changes to resolve moral issues. Resistance movements see institutions as unwilling or unable to respond to grievous threats to social norms and values and, perhaps as contemporary militias and the Christian right claim, actively compromising norms and values.

Robert Cathcart has written that social movements must create a “drama or agonistic ritual which forces response from the establishment commensurate with the moral evil perceived by movement members.” 43 It seldom takes long for a social movement to pose a threat that the established order can no longer ignore, and some theorists claim that a social movement at the national level spawns immediate organized opposition. 44 Perceived threat and increasing use of confrontational strategies produce, according to Cathcart, a “dialectical tension growing out of moral conflict,” and provokes a clash between the social movement and the threatened institution. 45 The struggle between institutional and institutional forces becomes a “true moral battle for power and for the legitimate right to define the true order.” 46

During the 1980s, students and faculty on hundreds of U.S. college campuses launched protests against the brutal apartheid policies of South Africa, a moral outrage on a massive scale. They created shantytowns on campuses that resembled those in South Africa, distributed facsimiles of
passbooks blacks were required to carry in South Africa, and gave speeches emphasizing the reality of life for the black residents of South Africa. A common demand was that the university divest itself of any endowment investments in South African corporations or U.S. corporations doing business in South Africa. At first, university administrations distributed press releases explaining why they could not or would not divest, made modest changes in their investment policies, and met with protesting groups. As protesters gained media attention, began to embarrass administrations with claims to the moral high ground, and refused to stop demonstrations or remove their shantytowns at prescribed deadlines, many were arrested and shanties were destroyed. Administrators came to see the antiapartheid demonstrations as threats to their powers of moral suasion and legitimate right to enforce university rules and determine investment policies. They could not cede the moral high ground to students and faculty and sometimes resorted to force and arrests to maintain their authority.

A “social conflict,” Simons writes, is “a clash over incompatible interests in which one party’s relative gain is another’s relative loss.” Thus, if the Gray Panthers representing millions of senior citizens pressure legislatures into allocating more money for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and long-term care facilities, younger persons and taxpayers will pay higher taxes. Social movements are always players in zero-sum games of social control and change.

Institutions often portray themselves as goaded into action by violent acts that pose dangerous, irresponsible, and unreasonable threats to legitimate—and therefore moral—social order. They counter social movements directly and indirectly through agencies, agents, and beneficiaries. Agencies include legislative bodies, executive and administrative groups, courts, police, armed forces, councils, task forces, regulatory bodies, tax authorities, communication media, and investigative groups. Agents include legislators, presidents, governors, mayors, bishops, judges, police officers, soldiers, owners of communication media, editors, reporters, commentators, and investigators such as special prosecutors. Beneficiaries include most of the above plus corporations, business owners and operators (including farmers and ranchers), colleges and universities, churches, patriotic and civic groups, and the “silent majority” of citizens.

Institutions, no matter how tolerant and understanding they may seem or want to be, can accept only minor challenges to norms, values, and their legitimacy. They cannot sustain a loss to uninstitutionalized forces and still maintain their authority, credibility, and control over constituencies. They must retain the moral high ground at all cost.

**Persuasion Is Pervasive**

Social movements must satisfy a number of requirements if they are to become and remain significant forces for change in societal norms and values. For instance, they must transform perceptions of reality, enhance the ego of protesters, attain a degree of legitimacy, prescribe and sell courses of action, mobilize the disaffected, and sustain the movement over time. Theoretically, social movements may attempt to satisfy such requirements through coercion, bargaining, and persuasion.
Coercion and Bargaining

Coercion is the "manipulation of the target group's situation in such fashion that the pursuit of any course of action other than that sought by the movement will be met with considerable cost or punishment." White Citizens Councils in the South relied heavily on coercion in their efforts to counter the civil rights movement. Bargaining may occur when the "movement has control of some exchangeable value that the target group wants and offers some of that value in return for compliance with demands." The United Farm Workers offered productive, reliable, and loyal workers to California growers in exchange for recognition and contracts.

The typical uninstitutionalized and minimally organized social movement enjoys few means of reward or punishment necessary either to coerce people to join or to remain loyal to a cause or to coerce institutions to capitulate to some or all of its demands. Institutions, with little to gain and much to lose, resist bargaining with social movements whose leaders and followers they have stigmatized as dangerous and inferior social degenerates. Michael Lipsky notes "People in power do not like to sit down with rogues." Mere association with a social movement's leaders may grant an undesired degree of legitimacy to the social movement and its cause. In addition, as Lipsky writes, institutions doubt the capability of movements to bargain effectively: "Protest oriented groups, whose primary talents are in dramatizing issues, cannot credibly attempt to present data considered 'objective' or suggestions considered 'responsible' by public officials. Few can be convincing as both advocate and arbitrator at the same time."

Social movements often have little or nothing to exchange in bargaining sessions. Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian comment, for instance, that "the difficulty that constantly besets black movements is that they have nothing to offer whites in a bargaining exchange to match their disruptive potential." Institutions pressure one another not to "give in" to demands of protestors. When students and faculties were protesting the apartheid policies in South Africa, the Wall Street Journal commented: "A surprising number of colleges have caved in to protest and announced divestment. This cowardice, too, promotes the kind of disruption going on this week on campuses across the nation, and undermines the institutions the administrators and trustees are supposed to protect."

Social movements are equally loath to bargain with the "devil"; they have vilified institutions in their portrayals of reality and demands for change. They have suffered grievous mental, economic, social, and physical abuse for their beliefs and protests. Talking to, let alone compromising with, corrupt and oppressive institutions may be deemed a moral outrage by a movement's true believers. For example, Terence Powderly, the longtime leader of the Knights of Labor in the 1880s and 1890s, complained that he should be "permitted to exercise his own judgment" and "permitted to think for the Order" and not be subjected to the "demaagogue's cry" that "he is selling out the labor movement" if he is seen "talking to a capitalist or entering the office of a man of wealth." Thus, the constituencies of both parties are likely to perceive offers to bargain as signs of weakness, desperation, deception, and a "selling out."

Social movements can satisfy only a few major requirements through bargaining and coercion. For example, bargaining may help mobilization for action by uniting disparate movement elements into coalitions, and it may exert pressure on institutions to meet with moderate collectives operating from a position of strength that are willing to discuss potential
compromises. The Christian Coalition exhibited its fundraising and voter strengths in the 1990s and was able to bargain effectively with conservative elements in Congress and political candidates at the local, state, and national levels. Coercion is limited mainly to pressuring the opposition or transforming perceptions of society by goading institutions into excessive repression, thus undermining their credibility. The Ruby Ridge incident in Idaho during which an FBI agent shot and killed the wife of white separatist Randy Weaver and the Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, Texas, instigated by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms that ended with a fiery inferno that claimed the lives of David Koresh and his followers were two examples of damaged credibility. After those incidents, some people believed that the federal government blew up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in which 168 people died (including 19 children) to provoke public outrage against militias and other groups opposing intrusive government.

Although a social movement may unmask an institution and gain some sympathy by provoking violent suppression, the public may just as easily condemn the movement and perceive the suppression as an "unfortunate but inevitable" result of dangerous radicalism. Social movements often splinter into factions over the issue of employing coercion (particularly violent acts such as bombings, assassinations, destruction of property, and disruptions) to achieve their ends. Because of the many constraints under which uninstitutionalized social movements must operate, persuasion is the primary agency for satisfying requirements and meeting obstacles.

**Persuasion**

Social movements use the communication process of persuasion to present their case. That is, they use verbal and nonverbal symbols to affect audience perceptions and to bring about changes in thinking, feeling, and/or acting. The Christian right, for example, has employed speeches, publications, the Internet, mass mailings, local organizations, and interpersonal contacts to sell its conservative agenda across the nation.

Persuasion is pervasive in social movements. Bargaining includes elements of persuasion. For instance, a social movement attempting to bargain must convince both supporters and the opposition inside and outside of the movement that it is serious in desiring to bargain, that it is a worthy participant for bargaining interactions, and that it has something of value to exchange for concessions. On the other hand, persuasion may preclude bargaining as a strategy. Lipsky writes "admission to policy making councils is frequently barred because of the angry, militant rhetorical style adopted by protest leaders."57

Coercion also includes elements of persuasion. Turner and Killian observe "nonviolence always couples persuasive strategy to coercion."58 For example, sit-ins, mass demonstrations, marches, hunger strikes, and disobedience of laws perceived as unjust all have persuasive elements such as language, arguments, and symbolic acts—but they also threaten institutions. Simons uses the phrase "coercive persuasion" to emphasize that "all acts of influence are rhetorical in at least some respects." He argues:

The trouble with the persuasion-coercion dichotomy if that it cannot be applied reliably to the real world, and especially to most conflict situations. Although the criteria used to distinguish persuasion and coercion enable us to identify different elements within a given act, and although there are a great many cases of "pure" persuasion which are
free of coercive elements, by these same criteria, acts conventionally labeled as “coercive” are almost never free of persuasive elements.59

Are any acts devoid of symbolic value and thus instances of pure coercion? The Supreme Court has ruled that coercive acts such as marches, sit-ins, boycotts, demonstrations, and articles of clothing such as armbands and uniforms constitute “symbolic speech” and are entitled to First Amendment protection. The Berrigan brothers’ destruction of draft records from the Selective Service Office in Catonsville, Maryland, was a coercive and yet highly symbolic act of protest during the Vietnam War.50 So are pro-life’s “sidewalk counseling” (during which protesters scream “Don’t kill your baby!” at women attempting to enter abortion clinics) and the throwing of blood or red paint by animal rights activists on women wearing fur coats. The occasional burning of an American flag by protestors is a highly symbolic act that expresses their anger, even hatred, of certain governmental actions or policies. Each burning, particularly when the appearance of protestors makes them look “radical” or different, inevitably produces outrage in many Americans and political leaders who see this as a direct attack on the nation’s highest symbol and therefore on the nation itself. Legislation is immediately proposed that would amend the Constitution to make flag burning a crime and prevent the Supreme Court from declaring the legislation unconstitutional. Parke Burgess argues that persuasion is essential when social movements threaten to use coercive tactics: “The Victim must be convinced that dire consequences are likely, not to say certain, before he can feel forced to comply, just as he must become convinced of the coercer’s probable capacity and intent to commit the act of violence before he can conclude that the act is likely to follow noncompliance.”61

Are any acts pure bargaining and devoid of persuasion and coercion? When two antagonists sit down to bargain, they attempt to convince one another that they are sincere, have something of value to offer, are operating from a position of strength, and can and will break off negotiations (and resort to force) if all does not proceed as desired. Neither party can be or appear to be in a situation where it must accept an offer. The coercion card must be playable.

Are any acts pure persuasion and devoid of bargaining or any hint of the carrot or the stick? Malcolm X’s famous persuasive speech “The Ballot or the Bullet” opens with attempts to appease the followers of Elijah Muhammad (founder of the Black Muslims), Christians, and followers of Martin Luther King, Jr.—a kind of bargaining or negotiating of differences.62 The speech proceeds with a lengthy appeal for black capitalism, pure persuasion. And the speech ends with thinly veiled threats to resort to the bullet if the ballot is unavailable or fails to produce results, coercive persuasion. Robert Doolittle reveals that some people perceived the race riots of the 1960s as inherently symbolic, others conceded that the riots were potentially symbolic, and some viewed them as lawless and totally lacking in symbolism.63 News reports of the 1992 riot in Los Angeles following the acquittal of the white police officers who had attacked Rodney King indicate that people interpreted this event much the same as they had the riots of the 1960s.64 James Andrews suggests that persuasion may be most effective when institutions “accept the harsh reality that they may be coerced.”65

Clearly, persuasion permeates the efforts of social movements to promote or resist change and is the primary agency available for satisfying essential requirements. The role of persuasion distinguishes social movements from two, often closely related, collective actions: civil wars and revo-
...utions. In social movements, persuasion is pervasive while violence is incidental and often employed for symbolic purposes. In civil wars and revolutions, violence is pervasive and rarely symbolic while persuasion is incidental.

To say that persuasion is pervasive in social movements and that it is the primary means for satisfying major requirements and overcoming obstacles is not to suggest that persuasion alone can bring ultimate success to social movements. Social movements must have skilled leaders, dedicated followers, effective organizations, a social system that permits or at least tolerates protest, a climate conducive to change, and luck. Pivotal incidents such as the nuclear power accidents at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania and Chernobyl in the Ukraine, the advent of AIDS in this country, Brown v. Board of Education that overturned the separate but equal court interpretations that had made separation of the races legal, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam were critical to the progress and dissolution of antinuclear power, civil rights, labor, and the anti-Vietnam war movements. However, such events would disappear into the pages of history if social movements did not employ persuasion to interpret them, focus media attention on them, and bring them back to audiences in demonstrations, anniversary celebrations, ceremonies, monuments, speeches, songs, and books. Persuasion grows stale without the urgency that events inject into protest.

Conclusions

A social movement, then, is an organized, uninstitutionalized, and large collectivity that emerges to promote or resist change in societal norms and values, operates primarily through persuasion, and encounters opposition in a moral struggle. This definition addresses what a social movement is and how it attempts to achieve its program for change or resistance to change. Persuasion is pervasive and is not restricted to a particular audience, purpose, requirement, strategy, or stage of a movement's life cycle. No other phenomenon called a movement or campaign shares all of these characteristics. A trend or fad, for example, is unorganized and contains no program for change. A revolution relies primarily upon violence rather than persuasion. A PAC or lobby group tends to be institutionalized (licensed and incorporated), small in size, and created for limited, pragmatic ends (get a candidate elected, maintain a subsidy for rice farmers, prevent gun legislation) rather than a moral struggle for change or maintenance of societal norms and values. A campaign is typically organized from the top down, includes managers with assigned roles, has specific and narrow goals, is relatively short in duration, and often has a known end point.

Our attempt to define the social movement as a unique collective phenomenon is designed to provide a clear focus for the chapters that follow and to inform readers of the underlying premises upon which this book is based. This definition is not designed to place rigid limitations on movement or campaign studies, and we recognize that movements occur within established institutions, describe changes in academic fields of study and voting trends, and determine our personal dress, appearance, habits, actions, and tastes. The continuing discussion about the uniqueness of social movements is analogous to the study of other common phenomena. For instance, researchers who analyze political, health, sales, advertising, and recruiting campaigns recognize that all campaigns share some common persuasive characteristics. They do not claim, however,
that the sharing of some characteristics means they have no significant differences. Institutional movements share many persuasive characteristics with social movements. These shared characteristics, however, do not make them identical twins. We are using the term social movement to identify a specific type of movement for study and research, a unique collective phenomenon.

Endnotes

17 At one time labor organizations such as the United Auto Workers, Teamsters, and the AFLCIO were movement organizations within the American labor social movement. Today, however, they are institutions that control millions of workers, bargain collectively with giant corporations, have direct roles in grievance processes, and have attained (in many situations) profit sharing for members. The Teamsters and other unions have attempted to thwart the efforts of new unions such as the United Farm Workers in California.


*Time*, 26 April 1993, 27.


Other names for innovative social movements are revisionary, alternative, redemptive, and transformative.

Other names for revivalistic social movements are reactionary, regressive, and nationalistic.

Other names for resistance social movements are conservative and counter.


Cathcart, “Movements,” 246.


Turner and Killian, 291.


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Collective Action

Richard T. Schaefer

The growth of pan-Indian activism is an example of both panethnicity and social protest. As we noted in Chapter 1, the panethnic development of solidarity among ethnic subgroups has been reflected in terms such as Hispanic, Latino, and Asian American. Pan-Indianism refers to intertribal social movements in which several tribes, joined by political goals but not by kinship, unite in a common identity. Today, these pan-Indian efforts are most vividly seen in cultural efforts and political protests of government policies (Cornell 1996).

Proponents of this movement see the tribes as captive nations or internal colonies. They generally see the enemy as the federal government. Until recently, pan-Indian efforts usually failed to overcome the cultural differences and distrust between tribal groups. However, some efforts to unite have succeeded. The Iroquois made up a six-tribe confederation dating back to the seventeenth century. The Ghost Dance briefly united the Plains tribes in the 1880s, some of which had earlier combined to resist the U.S. Army. But these were the exceptions. It took nearly a century and a half of BIA policies to accomplish a significant level of unification.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), founded in 1944 in Denver, Colorado, was the first national organization representing Native Americans. The NCAI registered itself as a lobby in Washington, D.C., hoping to make the Native American perspective heard in the aftermath of the Reorganization Act described earlier. Concern about “White people's meddling” is reflected in the NCAI requirement that White members pay twice as much in dues. The NCAI has had its successes. Early in its history, it played an important role in creating the Indian Claims Commission, and it later pressured the BIA to abandon the practice of termination. It is still the most important civil rights organization for Native Americans and uses tactics similar to those of the NAACP, although the problems facing African Americans and Native Americans are legally and constitutionally different.

A more recent arrival is the more radical American Indian Movement (AIM), the most visible pan-Indian group. The AIM was founded in 1968 by Clyde Bellecourt (of the White Earth Chippewa) and Dennis Banks (of the Pine Ridge Oglala Sioux), both of whom then lived in Minneapolis. Initially, AIM created a patrol to monitor police actions and document charges of police brutality. Eventually, it promoted programs for alcohol rehabilitation and school reform. By 1972, AIM was nationally known not for its neighborhood-based reforms but for its aggressive confrontations with the BIA and law enforcement agencies.

**FISH-INS AND ALCATRAZ**

Fish-ins began in 1964 to protest interference by Washington State officials with Native Americans who were fishing, as they argued, in accordance with the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek and were not subject to fine or imprisonment, even if they did violate White society's law. The fish-ins had protesters fishing en masse in restricted waterways. This protest was initially hampered by disunity and apathy, but several hundred Native Americans were convinced that civil disobedience was the only way to bring attention to their grievances with the government. Legal battles followed, and
the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the treaty rights in 1968. Other tribes continued
to fight in the courts, but the fish-ins brought increased public awareness of the depriva-
tions of Native Americans. One of the longest battles continues to the present: the
Chippewas have rights to 50 percent of the fish, timber, and wildlife across the upper
third of Wisconsin. In 1991, Wisconsin agreed with this long-standing treaty right, but
Whites continue to demonstrate against what they feel is the unfair advantage ex-
tended to the Native Americans (Jofidon 1991; Steiner 1968).

The fish-ins were only the beginning. After the favorable Supreme Court decision in
1968, other events followed in quick succession. In 1969, members of the San Fran-
cisco Indian Center seized Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. The 13-acre island was
an abandoned maximum-security federal prison, and the federal government was un-
decided about how to use it. The Native Americans claimed “the excess property” in
exchange for $24 in glass beads and cloth, following the precedent set in the sale of
Manhattan more than three centuries earlier. With no federal response and the loss of
public interest in the demonstration, the protesters left the island more than a year
later. The activists’ desire to transform it into a Native American cultural center was
ignored. Despite the outcome, the event gained international publicity for their cause.
Red Power was born, and Native Americans who sympathized with the BIA were la-
abeled “Uncle Tomahawks” or “apples” (red on the outside, white on the inside).

The federal government did not totally ignore calls for a new policy that involved
Native Americans in its formulation. Nevertheless, no major breakthroughs came in
the 1960s. One significant step was passage of the Alaska Native Settlement Act of
1971. Alaskan Native American people—the 100,000 Inuit Eskimo and other Aleuts—
have maintained their claim to the land since Alaska was purchased from Russia in
1867. The federal government had allowed the natives to settle on about one-third of
the land they claimed but had not even granted them title to that land. The discovery
of huge oil reserves in 1969 made the issue more explosive as the state of Alaska auct-
toned off mineral rights, ignoring Inuit occupation of the land.

The Alaskan Federation of Natives (AFN), the major native Alaskan group, which
had been organized in 1967, moved quickly to stop “the biggest land grab in the his-
tory of the U.S.,” as the AFN called it. An AFN-sponsored bill was revised, and a com-
promise, the Native Claims Settlement Act, was passed in late 1971. The final act,
which fell short of the requests by the AFN, granted control and ownership of 44 mil-
ion acres to Alaska’s 53,000 Inuits, Aleuts, and other peoples and gave them a cash
settlement of nearly $1 billion. Given the enormous pressures from oil companies and
conservationists, the Native Claims Settlement Act can be regarded as one of the
more reasonable agreements reached between distinctive tribal groups of Native
Americans and the government. Further reforms in 1988 helped to safeguard the
original act, but as a major trade-off the Alaskan Native Americans surrendered future
claims to all aboriginal lands (Morrow 1996; Ogunwole 2002; Winton 1999).

PROTEST EFFORTS

The federal government, by closing the door to those presenting grievances and by its
lack of positive effort, ensured that it would be only a matter of time before Native
Americans took new steps to be heard. Therefore, the 1970s were marked by increas-
ingly militant protests by Native Americans. One moderate group organized a sum-
cer-long caravan to reach the nation’s capital just when the presidential election was
being held in 1972. The Nixon administration, increasingly distrustful of protesting
Native Americans, refused to meet with them. The militant AIM then emerged as the
leader of those frustrated by government unresponsiveness.

The most dramatic confrontation between Native Americans and the government
came early the next year in the battle of Wounded Knee II. In January 1973, AIM leader
Russell Means led an unsuccessful drive to impeach Richard Wilson as tribal chairman
of the Oglala Sioux tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In the next month, Means, ac-
accompanied by some 300 supporters, started a 70-day occupation of Wounded Knee,
South Dakota, site of the infamous cavalry assault in 1890 and now part of the Pine Ridge Reservation. The occupation received tremendous press coverage.

However, the coverage did not affect the outcome. Negotiations between AIM and the federal government on the occupation itself brought no tangible results. Federal prosecutions were initiated against most participants. AIM leaders Russell Means and Dennis Banks eventually faced prosecution on a number of felony charges, and both men were imprisoned. AIM had less visibility as an organization then. Russell Means wryly remarked in 1984, “We’re not chic now. We’re just Indians, and we have to help ourselves” (Hentoff 1984:23; also see Nagel 1988, 1996; Smith and Warrior 1996; T. Johnson 1996).

The most visible recent AIM activity has been its efforts to gain clemency for one of its leaders, Leonard Peltier. Imprisoned since 1976, Peltier was given two life sentences for murdering two FBI agents the year before on the embattled Sioux reservation of Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Fellow AIM leaders such as Dennis Banks organized a 1994 Walk for Justice to bring attention in Washington, D.C., to the view that Peltier is innocent. This view was supported in two 1992 movie releases: the documentary Incident at Oglala, produced by Robert Redford, and the more entertaining, fictionalized Thunderheart. To date, clemency appeals to the president to lift the federal sentence have gone unheeded, but this issue remains the rallying point for today’s remnants of AIM (Matthiessen 1991).

PAN-INDIANISM: AN OVERVIEW

Pan-Indianism, an example of panethnicity, has created a greater solidarity among Native Americans as they seek solutions to common grievances with government agencies. Research shows that tribal people born since the collective action efforts of the 1960s are more likely to reject negative and stereotypic representations of American Indians than those born before the self-determination efforts. Whether through moderate groups such as the NCAI or the more activist AIM, these pan-Indian developments have awakened Whites to the real grievances of Native Americans and have garnered the begrudging acceptance of even the most conservative tribal members, who are more willing to cooperate with government action (Schulz 1998).

However, the results of pan-Indianism have not all been productive, even when viewed from a perspective sympathetic to Native American self-determination. The national organizations are dominated by Plains tribes, not only politically but culturally as well. Powwow styles of dancing, singing, and costuming derived from the Plains tradition are spreading nationwide as common cultural traits (see Figure 6.3).

The growing visibility of powwows is symbolic of Native Americans in the 1990s. The phrase pow wow referred to the medicine man or spiritual leader of the Algonquian tribes, but Europeans who watched medicine men dance thought that the word referred to entire events. Over the last hundred years, powwows have evolved into gatherings in which Native Americans of many tribes come to dance, sing, play music, and visit. More recently, they have become organized events featuring competitions and prizes at several thousand locations. The general public sees them as entertainment, but for Native Americans, they are a celebration of their culture (Eschbach and Applbaum 2000).
### FIGURE 6.3  Ten Largest American Indian Tribal Groupings, 2000


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribal Grouping</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>261,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navajo</td>
<td>269,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American Indian</td>
<td>104,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
<td>87,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux</td>
<td>105,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>105,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apache</td>
<td>57,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackfeet</td>
<td>27,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>45,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pueblo</td>
<td>74,089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Movements and the Politics of Difference

Cheryl Zarlenza Kerchis and Iris Marion Young

There was once a time of caste and class when tradition held that each group had its place in the social hierarchy—that some were born to rule and others to be ruled. In this time of darkness, rights, privileges, and obligations were different for people of different sexes, races, religions, classes, and occupations. Inequality between groups was justified by both the state and the church on the grounds that some kinds of people were better than others.

Then one day, a period in the history of ideas known as the Enlightenment dawned, and revolutionary ideas about the equality of people emerged. During the Enlightenment, which reached its zenith in Europe in the eighteenth century, philosophers called into question traditional ideas and values that justified political inequality between groups. They declared that all people are created equal because all people are able to reason and to think about morality. They also argued that because all people are created equal, all people should have equal political and civil rights.

The ideas of Enlightenment thinkers have marked the battle lines of political struggle in the United States for the past two hundred years. The Revolutionary War was fought on Enlightenment principles, and our Constitution was based on the principles of liberty and equality. In the beginning, however, the vision of liberty and equality of our founders (as well as most Enlightenment philosophers) excluded certain groups. Women did not have equal political and civil rights, and African Americans were enslaved. Inspired by the ideals of liberty and equality, women and African Americans engaged in a long and bitter struggle for political equality. By the 1960s, the battle for legal equal political and civil rights was won, though the struggle for equality in all walks of life continues.

Today in our society, prejudice and discrimination remain, but in many respects we have realized the vision that the Enlightenment thinkers set out. Our laws express rights in universal terms, that is, applied equally to everyone. We strive for a society in which differences of race, sex, religion, and ethnicity do not affect people's opportunities to participate in all aspects of social life. We believe that people should be treated as individuals, not as members of groups, and that their rewards in life should be based on their individual achievement—not on their race, sex, or any other purely accidental characteristic.

Though there is much to admire in this vision of a society that eliminates group differences, it has its own limitations, which contemporary social movements have called into question. Just as Enlightenment social movements challenged widely held traditional ideas and values that justified oppression in their time, today's social movements are challenging widely held ideas about justice that justify oppression in our time. These social movements criticize the idea that a just society is one that eliminates group differences under the law and guarantees equal treatment for all individuals. The central question they wish to ask is this: is it possible that the ideal of equal treatment of all persons under the law and the attempt to eliminate group differences under the law in fact perpetuates oppression of certain groups?

... We will argue that the answer to this question is yes. In our argument we will first discuss the ideal of justice that defines liberation as the transcendence of group difference. We call this the ideal of assimilation. This ideal usually promotes the equal treatment of all groups as the primary way to achieve justice. In this discussion, we will show how recent social movements of oppressed groups in the United States have challenged this ideal of assimilation. These movements believe that by organizing themselves and defining their own positive group cultural identity they will be more likely to achieve power and increase their participation in public institutions. We call this positive recognition of differ-
assert the value of a culture tied to and respectful of the land, they call into question the dominant culture's materialism, which promotes pollution and environmental destruction. All of these questions posed by oppressed groups suggest that the values and norms of dominant groups comprise one perspective, one way of looking at the world, that is neither neutral, shared, nor necessarily superior to the ways of oppressed groups.

When we realize that the norms and values of privileged groups are not universal, it becomes possible to think about the relation between groups in a more liberating way. Oppressed groups are not deviant with respect to privileged groups. They simply differ from privileged groups in their values, norms, and experiences, just as privileged groups are different from them. Difference is a two-way street; each group differs from the other; each earns the label "different." When the relations among groups are defined this way, we eliminate the assumption of the inferiority of oppressed groups and the superiority of privileged groups and replace it with a recognition and respect for the value of the particular experiences and perspectives of all groups.

Third, by asserting the positive value of different groups' experiences, the politics of difference makes it possible to look critically at dominant institutions and values from the perspective of oppressed groups. In other words, the experiences and perspectives of oppressed groups provide critical insights into mainstream social institutions and values that can serve as a starting point for reform of those institutions and values. For example, by referring to their members as "brother" or "sister," African Americans engender in their traditional neighborhoods a sense of community and solidarity not found in the highly individualistic mainstream society. As mentioned earlier, feminists find in the human values of nurturing and caring a more superior way of approaching social and ecological relations than the competitive, militarist, and environmentally destructive approach of male-dominated society. The politics of difference takes these critiques by oppressed groups seriously, as a basis for reform of dominant institutions. Such critiques shed light on the ways that dominant institutions should be changed so that they no longer reinforce patterns of privilege and oppression.

Fourth, the politics of difference promotes the value of group solidarity amidst the pervasive individualism of contemporary social life and the politics of assimilation. Assimilationist politics treats each person as an individual, ignoring differences of race, sex, religion, and ethnicity; everyone should be treated equally and evaluated according to his or her individual effort and achievement. It is true that under this politics of assimilation many members of oppressed groups have achieved individual success, even by the standards of privileged groups. However, as we have already learned, many groups continue to be oppressed despite the individual success of some group members. For example, over the last thirty years, Blacks have increased their representation in well-paying occupations such as law, medicine, and engineering. Yet they are still very much underrepresented in these fields and overrepresented in less well-paying occupations like orderlies, taxicab drivers, and janitors. That is why oppressed groups refuse to see these individual successes as evidence that group oppression has been eliminated. Instead of celebrating the success of some of their members, they insist that the celebration wait until their whole group is liberated. In the politics of difference, oppressed groups, in solidarity, struggle for the fundamental institutional changes that will make this liberation possible.

By now, the distinctions between the politics of assimilation and the politics of difference should be clear. Some people might object to the way we have made these distinctions. We anticipate that the strongest objection will be that we have not presented fairly the advantages of a politics of assimilation that strives to transcend or get beyond group differences. Many who support the politics of assimilation do recognize the value of a pluralistic society in which a variety of lifestyles, cultures, and associations can flourish. We do not, however, take issue with this vision of a pluralistic society. What we emphasize is that this vision does not deal with fundamental issues that suggest the need for the politics of difference.

As we have repeated throughout this article, we think it is counterproductive and dishonest to try to eliminate the public and political significance of group difference in a society in which some groups are more privileged than others. The danger in this approach is that group differences get pushed out of the sphere of public discussion and action and come to be seen as a purely private or non-political matter. When this happens, the problem of oppression of some groups tends to go unaddressed in our public institutions, and patterns of privilege and oppression among groups are reinforced. The politics of
difference that we advocate recognizes and takes seriously the public and political importance of group differences, and takes the experiences of oppressed groups as a starting point for reform of our public institutions. The goal of this politics of difference is to change our institutions so that no group is disadvantaged or advantaged due to its distinct culture or capacities, thus ensuring that all groups have the opportunity to participate fully in the nation’s social and political institutions.

REDEFINING THE MEANING OF DIFFERENCE IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE

The Risk of Restigmatizing Oppressed Groups

Many people inside and outside the liberation movements we have discussed in this chapter are fearful of the politics of difference and its rejection of the politics of assimilation. The fear of many is that any public admission of the fact that groups are different will be used to justify once again the exclusion and separation of certain kinds of people from mainstream society. Feminists fear that the affirmation of values of caring and nurturing that are associated with motherhood will lead to a call for women to return to the kitchen and the home, places where it is claimed those values can best be utilized. African Americans fear that an affirmation of their different values and experiences will lead again to a call for separate schools and communities, “where they can be with their own kind.” Many in these groups are willing to accept the fact that formal equality (treating everyone the same under the law) reinforces current patterns of advantage. This, they say, is preferable to a politics of difference that risks the restigmatization of certain groups and the reestablishment of separate and unequal spheres for such groups.

We are sympathetic to these fears. It certainly is not unusual in political life for one’s ideas, actions, or policies to have unintended negative effects because others have used them to justify ends different from those intended. Nevertheless, we believe that this risk is warranted since the strategy of ignoring group differences in public policy has failed to eliminate the problem of group oppression; the same patterns of privilege and oppression continue to be reproduced. All of which begs the question, Is there a way to avoid this risk of restigmatizing groups and rejustifying their exclusion? We believe there is a solution and it depends on redefining the meaning of difference itself.

Rejecting the Oppressive Meaning of Difference

In order to avoid the risk of recreating the stigma that oppressed groups have faced in the past, the meaning of difference itself must be redefined. In other words, we must change the way people think about differences among groups. In the politics of difference, the meaning of difference itself becomes an issue for political struggle.

There is an oppressive way of understanding difference that has dominated Western thinking about social groups for many centuries. This meaning of difference, which we will call the essentialist meaning, defines social groups in opposition to a normative group—typically the dominant social group. The culture, values, and standards of one social group provide the standards against which all other groups are measured.

The attempt to measure all groups against some universal standard or norm generates a meaning of difference as dichotomy, a relation of two opposites. Thus we have paired categories of groups—men/women, white/Black, healthy/disabled, rich/poor, young/old, civilized/uncivilized, to name a few. Very often, the second term in the pair is defined negatively in relation to the first. Those in the second category are defined as lacking valued qualities of those in the first. There are rational men, and there are irrational women. There are productive, active young people, and there are feeble old people. There is a superior standard of humanity, and there is an inferior one.

This way of thinking about difference as a good/bad opposition in which groups are defined in relation to a supposedly universal norm has oppressive consequences. Some groups are marked out as having different natures, which leads quickly to the assumption that they therefore must have different aspirations and dispositions that fit them for some activities and not others. It also leads to the argument that because nature is static, change is impossible. Women are defined as lacking men’s rationality, which justifies their exclusion from high-ranking positions in business and government. People with disabilities are seen as unhealthy or helpless, which justifies isolating them in institutions.

The essentialist meaning of difference just described lies at the heart of racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other negative attitudes toward specific groups. In these ideologies only the oppressed groups are defined as different. When oppressed groups are thought of as
having fundamentally different natures from the "normal" group, it becomes easier for the "normal" group to justify excluding those groups from mainstream institutions and communities. On the other hand, once it is admitted that all groups have some things in common and that no group represents a universal or "normal" standard, it becomes more difficult to justify any group's exclusion from political and social life.

Redefining Difference as Variation
The politics of difference rejects the essentialist definition of difference, which defines it as deviance from a neutral norm and holds that some groups have essentially different natures and aspirations. In the politics of difference, however, group difference is seen as ambiguous and shifting, without clear categories of opposites that narrowly define people. Difference represents variation among groups that have similarities and dissimilarities. Groups are neither completely the same nor complete opposites. In the politics of difference, the meaning of group difference encompasses six key principles:

1. **Group difference is relational.** We can only understand groups in relation to each other. Group differences can be identified when we compare different groups, but no group can be held up as the standard of comparison. Thus, whites are just as specific a group as African Americans or Hispanics, men just as specific as women, able-bodied people just as specific as people with disabilities. Difference does not mean a clear and specific set of attributes that a group shares, but means variation and heterogeneity. It appears as a relationship between groups and the interaction of groups with social institutions.

2. **Group difference is contextual.** That difference is contextual simply means that group differences may be more or less relevant depending on the context or situation in which they come up. In any context, the importance of group difference will depend on the groups being compared and the reasons for the comparison. For example, in the context of athletics, health care, or social service support, wheel chair-bound people are different from others in terms of the special needs they might have. But in many other contexts, these differences would be unimportant. In the past, people with disabilities were often excluded and segregated in institutions because their physical difference was seen as extending to all their capacities and all facets of their lives.

Understanding difference as contextual eliminates this oppressive way of thinking about difference as all-encompassing.

3. **Group difference does not mean exclusion.** An understanding of difference as relational and contextual rejects the possibility of exclusion. No two groups lie exclusively outside each other in their experiences, perspectives, or goals. All groups have overlapping experiences and therefore are always similar in some respects.

4. **Members within a group share affinity for each other, not a fixed set of attributes.** Groups are not defined by a fixed set of characteristics or attributes that all group members share. What makes a group a group is the fact that they have a particular affinity for each other. The people I have an affinity for are simply those who are familiar to me and with whom I feel the most comfortable. Feelings of affinity develop through a social process of interaction and shared experience. People in an affinity group often share common values, norms, and meanings that express their shared experience. No person's affinities are fixed: a person's affinities may shift with changes in his or her life. Likewise, group identities may shift over time with changes in social realities.

5. **Groups define themselves.** Once we reject the idea that groups are defined by a set of common, essential attributes, groups are left to define for themselves what makes their particular group a group. This process of self-definition is emancipating in that it allows groups to reclaim a positive meaning for their difference and to decide collectively what they wish to affirm as their culture. Thus, the culture of oppressed groups is no longer defined by dominant groups in negative relation to mainstream culture. Many social movements of oppressed groups have begun this process of redefining their group identity for themselves. Both African American and Native American social movements have sought to redefine and reaffirm their cultural distinctiveness, often reclaiming from the past traditional values and norms that have meaning for them today. Some gays and lesbians are reappropriating the term "queer" and redefining it themselves.

6. **All groups have differences within them.** Our society is highly complex and differentiated, and no group is free of intragroup difference. For instance, a woman who is African American and a lesbian might identify with a variety
Memories of Summer Camp

I first set foot on Camp Sunrise as a timid eight-year-old camper along the beautiful shores of a New England lake. Summers at Sunrise became a tradition for the next eight years. Following my sophomore year in high school, I was overjoyed to learn I had been accepted as a counselor in training (CIT). What could be better? I considered the camp, along the shore of a New England lake, my home away from home. Eight weeks at the place I loved most, a place where I could be myself—or so I thought. Camp Sunrise is a Lutheran camp. And my religion? Well, I am a Catholic. I had never encountered a problem because of my religion. As I recall, there were always several nonpracticing Lutheran campers. However, when you are paying hundreds of dollars a week to attend, the camp makes sure every child feels welcome.

Every Sunday the camp held a church service. My Irish Catholic parents, however, had asked that I not receive communion. It was their only request of their Catholic daughter, so I agreed to obey their wishes. The majority of my CIT group was Lutheran, although there were a few Catholics whose parents allowed them to receive communion. On the first Sunday service, I was the only one from my CIT group not to receive communion. I thought nothing of it.

As the CITs were walking back to their tents, however, a bunkmate asked, "How come you didn't take communion?" "Well, my parents asked that I not receive because I am a baptized Catholic," I replied. "Well, do you want to?" she asked. "I don't really know. I just feel that this is the least I can do for them all they have done for me," I answered, while thinking that the only time the camp focused on Lutheranism was during the Sunday services. At other times Christianity was discussed in general, and I certainly joined the discussion. Her response cut through my stomach like a knife. "Then why do you come here?" she asked before walking away.

I could not believe what I had just heard. I was in shock. It didn't make sense. How could this be happening? I could never imagine being treated this way. Why did she think she belonged here more than I did? This camp was like my second home. I was just as good a counselor as she was whether or not I received communion. I had never been looked down on because of my religious beliefs. I wanted to go home then and there, but I knew better.

I told my CIT trainer about this confrontation. She helped me to understand that no matter where you go in life, if you are not part of the majority, you may be rejected for your differences. This, unfortunately, also held true at Sunrise. Nevertheless, I went on to have one of the best summers of my life. I have continued as a counselor, while following my religious beliefs, which do not interfere with my counseling abilities. My peers now understand that my Catholicism is as important to me as Lutheranism is to them, and respect me for my beliefs. However, I will never forget that Sunday of my CIT summer. It still hurts. But I have learned that you can't please everyone and you must hold strong to what is important to you.

Patricia Kelley

of social groups—women, African Americans, lesbians. A woman who is Hispanic and heterosexual might have different affinities. Within the context of a social movement such as the women's movement, these differences between women are potential sources of wisdom and enrichment as well as conflict and misunderstanding. Because there is a potential for conflict within groups among persons who identify with more than one group, groups, like society as a whole, must also be attentive to difference. . . .

CONCLUSION

This [article] relies on a handful of clear principles, which we will summarize here. Social justice requires democracy. People should be involved in collective discussion and decision making in all the settings that ask for their obedience to rules—workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and so on. Unfortunately, these social and political institutions privilege some groups over others. When some groups are more disadvantaged than others, ensuring democracy requires group representation for the disadvantaged. Group representation gives oppressed groups a voice in setting the public agenda and discussing matters on it. It also helps to ensure just outcomes of the democratic process by making sure that the needs and interests of all groups are expressed.

. . . . We have asserted that the ideal of a society that eliminates, transcends, or ignores group difference is both unrealistic and undesirable. Justice in a society with groups requires the social equality of all groups, and mutual and explicit recognition and affirmation of the value of group differences. The politics of difference promotes social equality and undermines group oppression by affirming the value of group difference, attending to group-specific needs, and providing for group representation in social institutions. The challenges faced by such a politics are
formidable. While many public and private institutions have begun to recognize the value of diversity, demands for a real voice for oppressed groups in decision-making processes are often met with fear and hostility. Still, we are hopeful that a politics of difference may be on the horizon. The United States is becoming more diverse, not less. Women and minorities comprise increasing proportions of the labor force and their needs are more and more difficult for employers and public officials to ignore.

However, demographic changes alone are unlikely to induce substantive policy change. Politics matters. While oppressed groups are increasing their representation in political institutions, social movements of oppressed groups will continue to play a critical role in shaping attitudes and dialogues about change and mobilizing the public to act. It is our hope that the ideas [presented here] provide a source of inspiration to social movements. The politics of difference is an alternative vision of politics that challenges the assumption that the present system is the only or best system. It is not meant as a blueprint for change, but as a starting point for dialogue. It provides a standpoint from which we can identify forms of injustice in our current institutions and explore different strategies to remedy them.
Twelve Key Supreme Court Cases

Karen E. Rosenblum and Toni-Michelle C. Travis

Individuals' lives are affected not only by social practices but also by law as interpreted in the courts. Under U.S. federalism Congress makes laws, the president swears to uphold the law, and the Supreme Court interprets the law. When state laws appear to be in conflict with the United States Constitution or when the terminology of the Constitution is vague, the Supreme Court interprets such laws. We will focus here on Supreme Court rulings that have defined the roles individuals are allowed to assume in American society.

As the supreme law above laws enacted by Congress, the U.S. Constitution determines individual and group status. A brief document, the Constitution describes the division of power between the federal and state governments, as well as the rights of individuals. Only 16 amendments to the Constitution have been added since the ratification of the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments). Although the Constitution appears to be sweeping in scope—relying on the principle that all men are created equal—in reality, the Constitution is an exclusionary document. It omitted women, Native Americans, and African Americans except for the purpose of determining a population count. In instances where the Constitution was vague on the rights of each of these groups, clarification was later sought through court cases.

Federalism provides four primary methods by which citizens may influence the political process. First, the Constitution grants citizens the right to petition the government, that is, the right to lobby. Second, as a civic duty, citizens are expected to vote and seek office. Once in office citizens can change conditions by writing new legislation, known as statutory law. Third, changes can be achieved through the lengthy procedure of passing constitutional amendments, which affect all citizens. Controversial amendments have often become law after social movement activists advocated passage for several years or after a major national upheaval, such as the Civil War.

Last, the Constitution provides that citizens can sue to settle disputes. Through this method, sweeping social changes can take place when Supreme Court decisions affect all the individuals in a class. Thus, the assertion of individual rights has become a key tool of those who were not privileged by the Constitution to clarify their status in American society.

An examination of landmark cases reveals the continuous difficulties some groups have had in securing their rights through legal remedy. The Court has often taken a narrow perspective on what classes of people were to receive equal protection of the law, or were covered under the privileges and immunities clause. Each group had to bring suit in every area where barriers existed. For example, white women who were citizens had to sue to establish that they had the right to inherit property, to serve on juries, to enter various professions, and in general to be treated as a class apart from their husband and family. Blacks sued to attend southern state universities and law schools, to participate in the all-white Democratic Party primary election, to attend public schools which had been ordered to desegregate by the Supreme Court, and to vote without having to pay a poll tax. When these landmark cases were decided, they were perceived to herald sweeping changes in policy. Yet they proved to be only a guide to determining the rights of individuals.

I. DRED SCOTT V. SANFORD (1857)

Prior to the Civil War the Constitution was not precise on whether one was simultaneously a citizen of a given state and of the entire United States. Slavery further complicated the matter because the status of slaves and free persons of color was not specified in the Constitution, nor were members of either group considered citi-
the result of group oppression. For example, the long history of exclusion and marginalization of African American people from the economic and educational systems of this country has made it very difficult for many of them to gain the levels of educational attainment and technical skills that whites have. Yet, despite this history of oppression, they must compete for jobs on the basis of qualifications that are the same for all groups, including historically privileged groups.

The second oppressive consequence of ignoring group difference is that it allows privileged groups in society to see their own culture, values, norms, and experiences as universal (shared by all groups) rather than group specific. In other words, ignoring group differences allows the norms and values that express the point of view and experience of privileged groups to appear neutral and uncontroversial. When the norms and values of particular privileged groups are held as normal, neutral, and universal, those groups that do not adhere to those norms and values are viewed by society as deviant or abnormal.

When groups that do not share the supposedly neutral values and norms of privileged groups are viewed as deviant or abnormal, a third oppressive consequence of ignoring difference is produced. Members of those groups that are viewed as deviant often internalize society’s view of them as abnormal or deviant. The internalization of the negative attitudes of others by members of oppressed groups often produces feelings of self-hatred and ambivalence toward their own culture. The ideal of assimilation asks members of oppressed groups to fit in and be like everyone else, yet society continues to see them as different, making it impossible for them to fit in comfortably. Thus, members of groups marked as different or deviant in comparison to privileged groups are caught in a dilemma they cannot resolve. On one hand, participating in mainstream society means accepting and adopting an identity that is not their own. And on the other, when they do try to participate, they are reminded by society and by themselves that they do not fit in.

The Liberating Consequences of the Politics of Difference

We have given three reasons why a strategy of assimilation that attempts to ignore, transcend, or devalue group differences is oppressive. We would now like to turn to the politics of difference and to explain the ways in which it is liberating and empowering for members of oppressed groups. The key difference between the politics of difference and the politics of assimilation lies in the definition of group difference itself. The politics of assimilation defines group difference in a negative way, as a liability or disadvantage to be overcome in the process of assimilating into mainstream society. In contrast, the politics of difference defines group difference in a positive way, as a social and cultural condition that can be liberating and empowering for oppressed groups. There are four ways in which this positive view of difference is liberating for oppressed groups.

First, a politics of difference that defines group difference in a positive way makes it easier for members of oppressed groups to celebrate and be proud of their identity, which the dominant culture has taught them to despise. In a politics of difference, members of oppressed groups are not asked to assimilate, to try to be something they are not. They are not asked to reject or hide their own culture as a condition of full participation in the social life of the nation. Instead, the politics of difference recognizes that oppressed groups have their own cultures, experiences, and points of view that have positive value for themselves and society as a whole. Some of their values and norms may even be superior to those of more privileged groups in society.

Second, by recognizing the value of the cultures and experiences of oppressed groups, the politics of difference exposes the values and norms of privileged groups as group specific, not neutral or universal. The politics of difference recognizes that the values and norms of privileged groups are expressions of their own experience and may conflict with those of other groups. In the politics of difference, oppressed groups insist on the positive value of their own cultures and experiences. When they insist on this, it becomes more and more difficult for dominant groups to parade their norms and values as neutral, universal, or uncontroversial. It also becomes more difficult for dominant groups to point to oppressed groups as deviant, abnormal, or inferior.

Thus, for example, when feminists assert the positive value of a caring and nurturing approach to the world, they call into question the competitive and individualistic norms of white male society. When African Americans proudly affirm the culture and history of Afro-America, they expose the culture and history of white society as expressing a particular experience—only one part of America’s story. When Native Americans
cial movements have put forth an ideal of liberation that we will call the politics of difference. In their view, a just society does not try to eliminate or ignore the importance of group differences. Rather, society seeks equality among social groups, requiring each to recognize and respect the value of the experiences and perspectives of all other groups. No group asks another to give up or hide its distinct experiences and perspectives as a condition of participation in social institutions.

Is a politics of difference really necessary? Are group differences really that important? Many political philosophers deny the importance of social groups. To them, the notion of group difference was created and kept alive by people who sought to justify their own privilege and the oppression of specific groups. Some theorists agree that there are important differences among groups that affect the way people see themselves and others, but they see these differences as undesirable. The ideal of assimilation either denies the importance of social groups or sees them as undesirable.

In contrast, we doubt that a society without social groups is possible or desirable. Today, whether we like it or not, our society is structured by social groups that have important consequences for people’s lives. Social groups do affect the way people see themselves and others in both positive and negative ways. People form their identities—their sense of who they are—in part through their membership in social or cultural groups. There is nothing inherently bad about people identifying with certain groups. Attachment to an ethnic tradition, language, culture, or set of common experiences has always been a feature of social life. The problem for a democratic nation occurs when group membership affects people’s capacities to participate fully in our social institutions. In the United States today, some groups are privileged while others are oppressed. The politics of difference offers a way of retaining the positive, identity-affirming aspect of group difference while eliminating the negative aspect—the privileging of some groups over others.

**The Oppressive Consequences of Ignoring Group Difference**

None of the social movements that we have discussed deny the claim that the strategy of eliminating group difference and treating all groups the same has helped improve the situation of oppressed social groups. On the contrary, each of these social movements at one time pursued such a strategy. But why did they eventually begin to question its effectiveness in eliminating group oppression? Why was assimilation called into question?

Many of these social movements of oppressed groups found that the achievement of formal equality under the law did not put an end to their disadvantaged position. Even though in many respects the law is now blind to group differences like sex and race, certain groups continue to be oppressed while other groups are privileged. Many forms of oppression, such as racial slurs, are more subtle, yet they are just as corrosive than the more easily identifiable forms of overt and intentional discrimination. They persist in the structure of institutions that make it difficult for members of disadvantaged groups to develop their capacities. Oppression also exists in forms of everyday interaction and decision making in which people make assumptions about the aspirations and needs of women, African Americans, Hispanics, gay men and lesbians, and other groups that continue to be oppressed. The idea that equality and liberation can only be achieved by ignoring group differences has three oppressive consequences for disadvantaged social groups.

First, ignoring group difference disadvantages groups whose experience and culture differ from those of privileged groups. The strategy of assimilation aims to bring excluded groups into the mainstream of social life. But assimilation always implies coming into the game after it has already begun, after the rules and standards have already been set. Therefore, disadvantaged groups play no part in making up the rules and standards that they must prove themselves by—those rules and standards are defined by privileged groups. The rules and standards may appear to be neutral since they are applied equally to all groups. In actuality though, their formation was based only upon the experiences of privileged groups—oppressed groups being excluded from the rule-making process.

If such standards are applied equally to all groups, why do they then place some groups at a disadvantage? The real differences between oppressed groups and dominant groups often make it difficult for oppressed groups to measure up to the standards of the privileged. These real differences may have to do with cultural styles and values or with certain distinct capacities (for example, women’s capacity to bear children). But quite often these differences are themselves
bers fought for women’s civil rights and the equal treatment of and equal opportunity for women in political institutions and the workplace. The movement strove to eliminate the significance of gender differences in social life. Women and men were to be measured by the same standards and treated in the same way in social institutions. Women’s rights advocates saw any attempt to define men and women as fundamentally different in their aspirations for successful careers outside the home as just another means of oppressing women and limiting their opportunity to participate in the male-dominated spheres of government and business. This strategy of assimilation was extremely successful in undermining traditional ways of thinking about sex differences and women’s roles. The idea that women naturally aspired to less in terms of participation in politics and the workplace was finally overturned.

Despite these successes, however, many in the women’s movement grew uncomfortable with this strategy of assimilation, which defined equality as the elimination of sex differences in social life. Since the late seventies, a politics of difference has emerged from within the women’s movement that rejects the goals of gender assimilation. The first signs of this rejection were seen among women who advocated feminist separatism.

Feminist separatists believed that women should aspire to more than formal equality in a male-dominated world. They argued that entering the male-dominated world meant playing according to rules and standards that men had set up and had used against women for centuries and across cultures. Instead of trying to measure up to male-defined standards, they called for the empowerment of women through self-organization and the creation of separate and safe places where women could share their experiences and devise their own rules of the game. In such separate and safe places, women could decide for themselves what was socially valuable activity instead of uncritically accepting the values and activities of a male-dominated society. One of the outcomes of this separatism was the creation of women’s organizations and services to address the needs of women that have historically received little attention from male-dominated society. The organizations formed in this period include women’s health clinics, battered women’s shelters, and rape crisis centers, all of which today continue to improve the lives of many women.

Some of the ideas of this separatist movement are reflected in the recent work of feminist philosophers and political thinkers. Unlike earlier feminist thinkers, these women question the idea that women’s liberation means equal participation of women in male-dominated political institutions and workplaces. While they do not suggest that women withdraw from such institutions, they suggest that society ought to rethink the value of femininity and women’s ways of approaching human relations. These theorists suggest that women tend to be socialized in a way that, in comparison with men, makes them more sensitive to others’ feelings, more empathetic, more nurturing of others and the world, and better at smoothing over tensions between people.

They argue that this more caring, nurturing, and cooperative approach to relations with other people should not be rejected out of hand by feminists as limiting women’s human potential or their ability to contribute to the world. They suggest that women’s attitudes toward others and toward nature constitute a healthier way to think about the world than the competitive and individualistic attitudes that characterize male-dominated culture in the Western world. By holding on to these values, women can help to transform institutions, human relations, and the interaction of people with nature in ways that may better promote people’s self-development within institutions and better protect the environment.

Thus, a political strategy that asks women to give up the values of caring or nurturing in order to succeed in the workplace or in politics not only undervalues what women have to contribute to those spheres, but undermines the possibility of transforming male-dominated institutions in a way that will result in a healthier society as a whole. To resolve this dilemma, then, the politics of assimilation needs to be replaced by a politics of difference that makes it possible for women to participate fully in social and political institutions without suppressing or undervaluing gender differences.

**WHY IS THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE LIBERATING?**

**The Importance of Group Difference in Social Life**

All of the social movements discussed above have offered an alternative view of liberation that rejects the ideal of assimilation. In their assertion of a positive sense of group difference, these so-
African American historians and educators have sought to recover the rich history of African America and have retold the stories of African American writers, artists, musicians, inventors, and political figures, who received little attention in the history textbooks of white America. And they have subsequently fought with school boards across the nation to ensure that respect for African American history and culture is integral to the history curricula under which every student in this country is educated.

All of these examples reflect a rejection of the idea that assimilation of African Americans into the dominant culture of America is a desirable goal. They instead reflect a desire for an alternative politics of difference through which African Americans can gain their fair share of power and increase their participation in social, political, and economic life in America without shedding their own self-determined group cultural identity.

The American Indian Movement Not long after the Black Power movement emerged in the 1960s, a movement with similar ideals arose among Native Americans. American Indian Movement leaders called for Red Power, which, like Black Power, rejected the assimilation of Native American peoples that had been the goal of government policies toward Indians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In many ways, their rejection of the dominant culture and its values was even stronger than that of Black Power.

The American Indian Movement claimed a right to self-government on Indian lands and struggled to gain a powerful Indian voice in the federal government branch responsible for policy making toward Native American peoples—the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They went to the courts to fight for land taken away from them. They also used the court system to fight for Indian control of natural resources on reservations that were being exploited by mining companies and other corporations.

Like Black Power, Red Power also extended its struggle beyond political and economic issues. Red Power advocates wanted to restore and strengthen cultural pride among Native Americans. In the last twenty years, Native Americans have struggled to recover and preserve elements of their traditional culture such as religious rituals, crafts, and languages that have been ravaged by the government’s policy of Indian assimilation.

The Gay and Lesbian Movement The gay and lesbian movement that emerged in the 1960s began, much like the African American movement of that period, as a struggle for equality and civil rights. Gay-rights advocates wanted to protect gay men and lesbians from discrimination in government institutions and in employment. The movement strived for the ideal of assimilation and equal treatment that we have talked about throughout this [article]. They asked society to recognize that gay people are no different from anyone else in their aspirations or moral worth, and that they too deserve the same protections under the law extended to all other U.S. citizens.

Over time, however, many members of the gay and lesbian movement came to believe that the achievement of civil rights alone would not liberate gay men and lesbians from the discrimination they faced in society. Though they had achieved some legal victories, gay men and lesbians were still often harassed, beaten up, and intimidated by heterosexuals who disapproved of their gay “lifestyle.” It seemed the dominant culture could tolerate gays and even extend limited legal protection to gay people as long as they kept their sexuality a private matter. But public displays of gay lifestyles were (and still are) often met with hostility and violence. For many gay men and lesbians, concealing their sexuality and lifestyles in a private world is just as oppressive as the public and explicit discrimination they often face in institutions.

Today, most gay and lesbian liberation groups seek not only equal protection under the law but also group solidarity and a positive affirmation of gay men and lesbians as social groups with shared experiences and cultures. They reject the ideal of assimilation that suppresses group differences in political and social life and makes these differences a purely private matter. They refuse to accept the dominant heterosexual culture’s definition of healthy sexuality and respectable family life, and instead have insisted on the right to proudly display their gay or lesbian identity. Like the other groups mentioned above, they have engaged in a politics of difference that they find more liberating than the politics of assimilation.

The Women’s Movement Until the late 1970s, the aims of the contemporary women’s movement were for the most part those of the ideal of assimilation. Women’s movement mem-
all persons (regardless of their group characteristics) and the right of all to participate in the institutions of society inspired many movements against discrimination. There is no question that it continues to have considerable value in our nation today, where many forms of discrimination against groups persist.

**Contemporary Challenges to the Ideal of Assimilation**

Since the 1960s, a number of groups have questioned the value of this ideal of assimilation and equal treatment. Is it possible, they have asked, that this ideal is not truly liberating for some oppressed groups? Instead of seeking to eliminate group difference, they wonder, would it not be more liberating for groups to organize themselves and assert their own positive group cultural identity? These groups see a politics of difference as opposed to a politics without difference as a better strategy for achieving power and participation in the institutions of social and political life. In the next section, we will discuss the efforts of four contemporary social movements to redefine the importance of group difference and cultural identity in social and political life in a way that they find more liberating.

**The African American Movement**

In the 1960s, with the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and numerous lawsuits spawned by these new laws, African Americans won major victories that declared racial discrimination in politics and the workplace illegal. Despite these successes, however, criticisms of the civil rights strategy emerged from within the African American community in the form of the Black Power movement. Black Power leaders criticized the civil rights movement for three reasons: they were unhappy with the civil rights movement’s goal of integration of African Americans into a society dominated by whites; they criticized the movement’s alliance with white liberals and instead called upon African Americans to confidently affirm their cultural identity; and they criticized the movement for not encouraging African Americans to organize themselves on their own terms and to determine their political goals within their own organizations.

Instead of supporting integration with whites, Black Power leaders called on African Americans to strengthen their own separate and culturally distinct neighborhoods as a better means of obtaining economic and political power. In sum, they rejected the ideal of assimilation and the suppression of group difference in political and economic life. In its place, they advocated self-organization and a strengthening of cultural identity as a better strategy for achieving power and participation in dominant institutions.

In recent years, many of the ideas of the Black Power movement have resurfaced among African Americans. Despite the legal protections won during the civil rights era, African American economic and political oppression persists. In economic life today, African Americans experience unemployment rates more than twice those of whites and poverty rates more than three times those of whites. And they still face substantial discrimination in educational opportunities, business opportunities, and the housing market.

What has happened since the 1960s? Why the persistence of inequalities almost forty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, and almost thirty years after the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts? Many African Americans argue that the push toward integration by the civil rights movement had unintended negative effects on the African American community. While civil rights protections opened the doors of opportunity for some African Americans, those left behind were made worse off. Many African Americans have been assimilated into the middle class and no longer associate as closely with poor and working class African Americans. As a consequence, African American solidarity has been weakened, and in many neighborhoods African American businesses, schools, and churches have been hurt by the exodus of middle-class African American families. Hence, once again, many African American leaders are calling for a rejection of the goal of integration and assimilation and are calling upon African Americans to organize themselves and seek economic and political empowerment within their own neighborhoods.

Another legacy of the Black Power movement that lives on today is the assertion of a positive Black cultural identity. The “Black is beautiful” movement that emerged in the 1960s celebrated a distinct African American culture and struggled against the assimilation of that culture into the dominant culture of American society. In their clothing and hairstyles, members confidently asserted their own cultural styles and rejected the narrow definition of style and beauty of the predominantly white culture. Since that time,
ence the politics of difference, and explain how it is more likely to aid in the liberation of oppressed groups.

... We will [also] discuss the need to change the way we think about group differences in order to have a politics of difference that leads to the liberation of oppressed groups. We will explore the risks associated with a politics of difference, in particular, the risk of recreating the harmful stigma that group difference has had in the past. To avoid this restigmatizing of groups, we will argue for a new and positive understanding of difference that rejects past exclusionary understandings of difference.

... [Finally,] we will consider practical issues of policy and representation in relation to a politics of difference. First, we will discuss the issue of group-neutral versus group-conscious policies. By this we mean policies that treat all groups in the same way (group-neutral) versus policies that treat different groups differently (group-conscious). We will discuss two specific cases in which group-conscious policies are needed to ensure fairness to disadvantaged groups. Lastly, we will argue for group representation in American social institutions including governmental and non-governmental institutions. We will explain how group representation promotes justice, suggest the kinds of groups that should be represented, and give some examples of group representation within some already-existing organizations and movements in the United States.

LIBERATION FOR OPPRESSED GROUPS
THROUGH THE IDEAL OF ASSIMILATION

The Ideal of Assimilation and Equal Treatment of Social Groups

What strategy of reform is most effective for achieving the liberation of oppressed groups? If we desire a non-racist, non-sexist society, how can we get there? One strategy for achieving this society is to pursue what we call an ideal of assimilation. The ideal of assimilation as a strategy for the liberation of oppressed groups involves the elimination of group-based differences under the law. Thus, in a truly non-racist, non-sexist society, a person’s race or sex would be no more significant in the eyes of the law than eye color or any other accidental characteristic. People would have different physical characteristics (such as skin color), but these would play no part in determining how people treated each other or how they were treated under the law. Over time, people would see no reason to consider race or sex in policies or in everyday activities, and group-based differences by and large would no longer matter.

Many contemporary thinkers argue for this ideal of assimilation and against the ideal of diversity that we will argue for later in this chapter. And there are many convincing reasons to support such an ideal. Perhaps the most convincing reason is that the principle of equal treatment of groups provides a clear and easily applied standard of equality and justice for use by courts and government institutions that deal with issues of race and sex discrimination. Under a standard of equal treatment, any discrimination whatsoever on the basis of group differences is considered illegal. Any law, regulation, employment practice, or government policy that treats persons differently on the basis of the race or sex is labeled unjust. The simplicity of this principle of equal treatment makes it a very attractive standard of justice.

There are two other convincing reasons to support the ideal of assimilation and the principle of justice as equal treatment. First, the ideal of assimilation may help to change the way people think about group differences. It treats classifications of people according to accidental characteristics like skin color or gender as arbitrary, not natural or necessary. Some people happen to be Black. Some are female or Hispanic or Jewish or Italian. But these differences do not mean that these people have different moral worth or that they necessarily aspire to anything different than anyone else in political life, in the workplace, or in the family. By suggesting that these categories are not important, the ideal of assimilation helps us realize how often we limit people’s opportunities in society (because they are Black, female, and so on) for arbitrary reasons. Second, the ideal of assimilation gives individuals a great deal of choice in their lives. When group differences have no social importance, people are free to develop themselves as individuals, without feeling the pressures of group expectations. If I am a woman, I can aspire to anything I wish to and not feel any special pressure to pursue or settle for, for instance, one occupation versus another.

The ideal of assimilation, which calls for equal treatment of groups and the elimination of group difference in social life, has been extremely important in the history of oppressed groups. Its assertion of the equal moral worth of
zens. Each state had the option of determining the status and rights of these nonwhites.

A federal form of government permitted flexibility by allowing states to differ on matters such as rights for its citizens. Yet as a newly invented form of government, a number of issues that were clear under British law were not settled until the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were added to the United States Constitution. Federalism raised questions about rights and privileges because a citizen was simultaneously living under the laws of a state and of the United States. Who had rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution? Did all citizens have all rights and privileges?

For example, what was the status of women? The Constitution provided for citizenship, but did not specify which rights and privileges were granted to female citizens. State laws considered white men and white women citizens, yet white women were often not allowed to own property, sue in court, or vote. Under federalism, each state enacted laws determining the rights and status of free blacks, slaves, white men, and white women so long as the laws did not conflict with the United States Constitution.

The Dred Scott case of 1846 considered the issues of slavery, property, citizenship, and the supremacy of the United States over individual states when a slave was taken to a free territory. The Court's holding primarily affected blacks, now called African Americans,3 who sought the benefits of citizenship. Broadly, the case addressed American citizenship, a matter not clearly defined until passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868.

Dred Scott was an enslaved man owned by Dr. John Emerson, a U.S. Army surgeon stationed in Missouri. When Emerson was transferred to Rock Island, Illinois, where slavery was forbidden, he took Dred Scott with him. Emerson was subsequently transferred to Fort Snelling, a territory (now Minnesota) where slavery was forbidden by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. In 1838, he returned to Missouri with Dred Scott.

In 1846 Scott brought suit in a Missouri circuit court to obtain his freedom on the grounds he had resided in free territory for periods of time. Scott won the case and his freedom. However, the judgment was reversed by the Missouri Supreme Court. Later, when John Sanford, a citizen of New York and the brother of Mrs. Emerson, arranged for the sale of Scott, the grounds were established for Scott to take his case to the federal circuit court in Missouri. The federal court ruled that Scott and his family were slaves and therefore the "lawful property" of Sanford. With the financial assistance of abolitionists, Scott appealed his case to the Supreme Court.

The Court's decision addressed these key questions:

1. Are blacks citizens?
2. Are blacks entitled to sue in court?
3. Can one have all the privileges and immunities of citizenship in a state, but not the United States?
4. Can one be a citizen of the United States and not be qualified to vote or hold office?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Dred Scott v. Sanford4

Mr. Chief Justice Taney delivered the opinion of the Court:

... The question is simply this: Can a Negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States...

The question before us is whether the class of persons described are constituent members of this sovereignty? We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States.

In discussing this question, we must not confound the rights of citizenship which a State may confer within its own limits and the rights of citizenship as a member of the Union. It does not by any means follow, because he has all the rights and privileges of a citizen of a State, that he must be a citizen of the United States. He may have all of the rights and privileges of a citizen of a State, and yet not be entitled to the rights and privileges of a citizen in any other State. ...

Undoubtedly a person may be a citizen... although he exercises no share of the political power, and is incapacitated from holding particular office. Those who have not the necessary qualifications cannot vote or hold the office, yet they are citizens.

The court is of the opinion, that... Dred Scott was not a citizen of Missouri within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States, and not entitled as such to sue in its courts: and, consequently, that the Circuit Court had no jurisdiction...
II. THE CIVIL WAR AMENDMENTS

The Civil War (1861–1865) was fought over slavery, as well as the issue of supremacy of the national government over the individual states.

After the Civil War, members of Congress known as the Radical Republicans sought to protect the freedom of the former slaves by passing the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. These amendments, especially the Fourteenth, have provided the foundation for African Americans, as well as women, gays, Native Americans, immigrants, and those who are disabled to bring suit for equal treatment under the law.

Amendment XIII, 1865
(Slavery)
This amendment prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States. The entire amendment follows:

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIV, 1868
(Citizenship, Due Process, and Equal Protection of the Laws)
This amendment defined citizenship; prohibited the states from making or enforcing laws that abridged the privileges or immunities of citizenship; forbade states to deprive persons of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; and forbade states to deny equal protection of the law to any person. Over time the Fourteenth Amendment became the most important of the Reconstruction amendments. Key phrases such as “privileges and immunities,” “deprive any person of life, liberty, or the pursuit of justice,” and “deny to any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the law” have caused this amendment to be the subject of more Supreme Court cases than any other provision of the Constitution. The entire amendment follows:

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector or President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payments of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave, but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5. The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Amendment XV, 1870
(The Right to Vote)
The entire amendment follows:

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

As we have seen, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were added to the Constitution expressly with former slaves in mind. In Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment, the definition of citizenship was clarified.
and granted to blacks. In the Fifteenth Amendment black males, former slaves, were granted the right to vote. For women, however, the situation was different.

During the 19th century there was no doubt that white females were U.S. citizens, but their rights as citizens were unclear. For example, although they were citizens, women were not automatically enfranchised. Depending on state laws, they were barred from owning property, holding office, or voting. The 1872 case of *Bradwell v. The State of Illinois* specifically tested whether women as United States citizens had the right to become members of the bar. More generally, it addressed whether the rights of female citizens included the right to pursue any employment.

III. MINOR V. Happersett (1875)

The Fifteenth Amendment was not viewed as a triumph for women because it specifically denied them the vote. Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment for the first time made reference to males as citizens. Since black men were included but women of all races were omitted, women were left to continue to seek changes through the courts. This was a difficult route because in subsequent cases, judges often held a narrow view that the legislators wrote the amendment only with black males in mind. Thus, a pattern was soon established in which white women followed black men and women in asserting their rights as citizens as seen in the 1875 case of *Minor v. Happersett*. In *Dred Scott* the question was whether Scott was a citizen; in *Minor* the question was whether *Minor* as a citizen had the right to vote. In both cases the Supreme Court said no.

Virginia Minor, a native-born, free, white citizen of the United States and the state of Missouri, and over the age of 21 wished to vote for president, vice president, and members of Congress in the election of November 1872. She applied to the registrar of voters but was not allowed to vote because she was not a "male citizen of the United States." As a citizen of the United States, Minor sued under the privileges and immunities clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Court’s decision addressed these key questions:

1. Who is covered under the term 'citizen'?
2. Is suffrage one of the privileges and immunities of citizenship?
3. Did the Constitution, as originally written, make all citizens voters?
4. Did the Fifteenth Amendment make all citizens voters?
5. Can a state confine voting to only male citizens without violating the Constitution?

While women were citizens of the United States and the state where they resided, they did not automatically possess all the privileges granted to male citizens, such as suffrage. This landmark case was not overturned until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which enfranchised women, in 1920.5

**Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Minor v. Happersett**

Mr. Chief Justice Waite delivered the opinion of the Court:

... It is contended [by Minor’s counsel] that the provisions of the Constitution and laws of the State of Missouri which confine the right of suffrage and registration therefore to men, are in violation of the Constitution of the United States, and therefore void. The argument is, that as a woman, born or naturalized in the United States is a citizen of the United States and of the State in which she resides, she has the right of suffrage as one of the privileges and immunities of her citizenship, which the State cannot by its laws or Constitution abridge.

... There is no doubt that women may be citizens.

... From this it is apparent that from the commencement of the legislation upon this subject alien women and alien minors could be made citizens by naturalization, and we think it will not be contended that native women and native minors were already citizens by birth.

... More cannot be necessary to establish the fact that sex has never been made one of the elements of citizenship in the United States. In this respect men have never had an advantage over women. The same laws precisely apply to both. The Fourteenth amendment did not affect the citizenship of women any more than it did of men... therefore, the rights of Mrs. Minor do not depend upon the amendment. She has always been a citizen from her birth, and entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizenship. The amendment prohibited the State, of which she is a citizen, from abridging any of her privileges and immunities as a citizen of the United States.

... The direct question is, therefore, presented whether all citizens are necessarily voters.

The Constitution does not define the privileges and immunities of citizens. For that definition we must look elsewhere.

... The [Fourteenth] amendment did not add to the privileges and immunities of a citizen. It simply furnished an additional guarantee for the pro-
tection of such as he already had. No new voters were necessarily made by it.

... No new State has ever been admitted to the Union which has conferred the right of suffrage upon women, and this has never been considered a valid objection to her admission.

... Certainly, if the courts can consider any question settled, this is one. For nearly ninety years the people have acted upon the idea that the Constitution, when it conferred citizenship, did not necessarily confer the right of suffrage. ... Our province is to decide what the law is, not to declare what it should be.

The Dred Scott, Bradwell, and Minor cases point to the similarity in the status of black men and women of all races in 19th-century America. As one judicial scholar noted, race and sex were comparable classes, distinct from all others. Historically, these “natural classes” were considered permanent and unchangeable. Thus, both slavery and the subjugation of women have been described as a caste system where one’s status is fixed from birth and not alterable based on wealth or talent.

Indeed, the connection between the enslavement of black people and the legal and social standing of women was often traced to the Old Testament. Historically slavery was justified on the grounds that one should look to Abraham; the Bible refers to Abraham’s wives, children, men servants, maid servants, camels, and cattle as his property. A man’s wife and children were considered his slaves. By the logic of the 19th century, if women were slaves, why shouldn’t blacks be also?

Thus, the concepts of race and sex have been historically linked. Since “the doctrines were developed by the same people for the same purpose it is not surprising to find anti-feminism to be an echo of racism, and vice versa.”

Additional constitutional amendments were necessary for women and African Americans to exercise the privileges of citizenship that were automatically granted to white males. Nonetheless, even after amendments were enacted, African Americans still had to fight for enforcement of the law.

IV. PLESSY V. FERGUSON (1896)

After the Civil War the northern victors imposed military rule on the South. White landowners and former slave holders often found themselves with unproductive farmland and no free laborers. Aside from the economic loss of power, white males were in a totally new political environment: Black men had been elevated to citizens; former slaves were now eligible to vote, run for office, and hold seats in the state or national legislature. To ensure the rights of former slaves, the U.S. Congress passed the Civil War Amendments and provided federal troops to oversee federal elections.

However, when federal troops were withdrawn from the southern states in 1877, enfranchised black men became vulnerable to former masters who immediately seized political control of the state legislatures. In order to solidify political power, whites rewrote state constitutions to disenfranchise black men. To ensure that all blacks were restricted to a subordinate status, southern states systematically enacted “Jim Crow” laws, rigidly segregating society into black and white communities. These laws barred blacks from using the same public facilities as whites, including schools, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, and recreation areas. With the cooperation of southern elected officials, the Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist, terrorist organization, grew in membership. The return of political power to whites without any federal presence to protect the black community set the stage for “separate but equal” legislation to become a constitutionally valid racial doctrine.

Under slavery, interracial sexual contact was forbidden but white masters nonetheless had the power to sexually exploit the black women who worked for them. The children of these relationships, especially if they looked white, posed potential inheritance problems because whites feared that such children might seek to exercise the privileges accorded to their white fathers. In order to keep all children of such relationships subordinate in the two-tiered racial system, descent was based on the race of the mother. Consequently, regardless of color, all the children of black women were defined as black.

This resulted in a rigid biracial structure where all persons with “one drop” of black blood were labeled black. Consequently, the “black” community consisted of a wide range of skin color based on this one-drop rule. Therefore, at times individuals with known black ancestry might look phenotypically white. This situation created a group of African Americans who had one-eighth or less African ancestry.

Louisiana was one of the few states to modify the one-drop rule of racial categorization because it considered mulattoes a valid racial category. A term derived from Spanish, mulatto refers to the
offspring of a "pure African Negro" and a "pure white." Over time, mulatto came to encompass children of whites and "mixed Negroes."

These were the social conditions in 1896, when Homer Adolph Plessy, a mulatto, sought to

test Louisiana laws that imposed racial segregation. Plessy and other multoos decided to test the applicability of the law requiring racial separation on railroad cars traveling in interstate transportation.

In 1890, Louisiana had followed other southern states in enacting Jim Crow laws that were written in compliance with the Equal Protection Clause of Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment. These laws required separate accommodations for white and black railroad passengers. In this case, Plessy, a U.S. citizen and a resident of Louisiana who was one-eighth black, paid for a first-class ticket on the East Louisiana Railroad traveling from New Orleans to Covington, Louisiana. When he entered the passenger train, Plessy took a vacant seat in a coach designated for white passengers. He claimed that he was entitled to every "recognition, right, privilege, and immunity" granted to white citizens of the United States by the Constitution. Under Louisiana law, the conductor, who knew Plessy, was required to ask him to sit in a coach specifically assigned to nonwhite persons. By law, passengers who sat in the inappropriate coach were fined or imprisoned. When Plessy refused to comply with the order, he was removed from the train and imprisoned.

Plessy v. Ferguson is the one case that solidified the power of whites over blacks in southern states. Through state laws, and with the additional federal weight in the Plessy decision, whites began to enforce rigid separation of the races in every aspect of life.

In Plessy, Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote the only dissenting opinion. Usually in Supreme Court cases, attention is focused on the majority, rather than the dissenting opinion. However, in this case Justice Harlan's dissent is noteworthy because his views on race and citizenship pointed out a line of reasoning that eventually broke down segregation and second-class citizenship for blacks.

Justice Harlan's background as a Kentucky slaveholder who later joined the Union side during the Civil War is cited as an explanation of his views. Some scholars speculate that his shift from slaveholder to a defender of the rights of blacks was caused by his observation of beatings, lynchings, and the use of intimidation tacs

against blacks in Kentucky after the Civil War. In a quirk of history, when Plessy v. Ferguson was overturned in 1954 by a unanimous opinion in Brown v. Board of Education, Justice Harlan's grandson was a member of the Supreme Court.

The Court's decision addressed these key questions:

1. How is a black person defined?
2. Who determines when an individual is black or white?
3. Does providing separate but equal facilities violate the Thirteenth Amendment?
4. Does providing separate but equal facilities violate the Fourteenth Amendment?
5. Does a separate but equal doctrine imply inferiority of either race?
6. Can state laws require the separation of the two races in schools, theaters, and railway cars?
7. Does the separation of the races when applied to commerce within the state of Louisiana abridge the privileges and immunities of the "colored man," deprive him of equal protection of the law, or deprive him of his property without due process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Plessy v. Ferguson

Mr. Justice Brown delivered the opinion of the Court:


... No person or persons, shall be admitted to occupy seats in coaches, other than the ones assigned to them on account of the race they belong to.

... The constitutionality of this act is attacked upon the ground that it conflicts both with the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, abolishing slavery, and the Fourteenth Amendment, which prohibits certain restrictive legislation.

... A statute which implied merely a legal distinction between the white and colored races... has no tendency to destroy the legal equality of the two races, or reestablish a state of servitude.

... The object of the amendment [the Fourteenth Amendment] was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either.
Laws permitting and even requiring their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power. The most common instance of this is connected with the establishment of separate schools for white and colored children, which has been held to be a valid exercise of the legislative power even by courts of States where the political rights of the colored race have been longest and most earnestly enforced. One of the earliest of these cases is that of Robert v. City of Boston, 5 Cush. 198, in which the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts held that the general school committee of Boston had power to make provision for the instruction of colored children in separate schools established exclusively for them, and to prohibit their attendance upon the other schools.

... We are not prepared to say that the conductor, in assigning passengers to the coaches according to their race, does not act at his peril. ... The power to assign to a particular coach obviously implies the power to determine to which race the passenger belongs, as well as the power to determine who, under the laws of the particular State, is to be deemed a white, and who is a colored person.

... We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it. ... The argument also assumes that social prejudices may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition. If the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities, a mutual appreciation of each other's merits and a voluntary consent of individuals.

... If the civil and political rights of both races be equal one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane.

It is true that the question for the proportion of colored blood necessary to constitute a colored person, as distinguished from a white person, is one upon which there is a difference of opinion in the different States, some holding that any visible admixture of black blood stamps the persons as belonging to the colored races, others that it depends upon the preponderance of blood ... still others that the predominance of white blood must only be in the proportion of three fourths. ... But these are questions to be determined under the laws of each State.

Mr. Justice Harlan in the dissenting opinion:

... It was said in argument that the statute of Louisiana does not discriminate against either race, but prescribes a rule applicable alike to white and colored citizens. ... [But] everyone knows that the statute in question had its origin in the purpose, not so much to exclude white persons from railroad cars occupied by blacks, as to exclude colored people from coaches occupied by or assigned to white persons.

... It is one thing for railroad carriers to furnish, or to be required by law to furnish, equal accommodations for all whom they are under a legal duty to carry. It is quite another thing for government to forbid citizens of the white and black races from traveling in the same public conveyance, and to punish officers of railroad companies for permitting persons of the two races to occupy the same passenger coach. If a State can prescribe, as a rule of civil conduct, that whites and blacks shall not travel as passengers in the same railroad coach, why may it not so regulate the use of the streets of its cities and towns as to compel white citizens to keep on one side of a street and black citizens to keep on the other? Why may it not, upon public grounds, punish whites and blacks who ride together in street cars or in open vehicles on a public road or street? Why may it not require sheriffs to assign whites to one side of a court-room and blacks to the other? And why may it not also prohibit the commingling of the two races in the galleries of legislative halls or in public assemblages convened for the consideration of the political questions of the day? Further, if this statute of Louisiana is consistent with the personal liberty of citizens, why may not the State require the segregation in railroad coaches of native and naturalized citizens of the United States, or of Protestants and Roman Catholics?

... In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott case.

... The thin disguise of "equal" accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead anyone, nor atone for the wrong this day done.

Thus, the Plessy v. Ferguson decision firmly established the separate but equal doctrine in the South until the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP) began to systematically attack Jim Crow laws. It is ironic that in Plessy the systematic social, political, and economic suppression of blacks in the South through Jim Crow laws was justified in terms of a case decided in the northern city of Boston, where the segregation of schools occurred in practice (de facto), but not by force.
of law \textit{(de jure)}. In that 1849 case (\textit{Roberts v. City of Boston}, 5 Cush. 198), a parent had unsuccessfully sued on behalf of his daughter to attend a public school. Thus, educational access became both the first and last chapter—in the 1954 case of \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}—of the doctrine of separate but equal.

\textbf{V. BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954)}

Unlike many of the earlier cases brought by individual women, blacks, or Native Americans, \textit{Brown v. Board of Education} was the result of a concerted campaign against racial segregation led by Howard University School of Law graduates and the NAACP. In the 1930s, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund began to systematically fight for fair employment, fair housing, and desegregation of public education. Key lawyers in the campaign against segregation were Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall, James Nabrit, and William Hastie. Marshall later became a Supreme Court justice, Nabrit became president of Howard University, and Hastie became a federal judge.

By using the Fourteenth Amendment, \textit{Brown} became the key case in an attempt to topple the 1896 separate but equal doctrine. Legal strategists knew that educational opportunity and better housing conditions were essential if black Americans were to achieve upward mobility. While one group of lawyers focused on restrictive covenant cases, which prevented blacks from buying housing in white neighborhoods, another spearheaded the drive for blacks to enter state-run professional schools.

In 1954, suits were brought in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware on behalf of black Americans seeking to attend nonsegregated public schools. However, the case is commonly referred to as \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}. The plaintiffs in the suit contended that segregation in the public schools denied them equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. The contention was that since segregated public schools were not and could not be made equal, black American children were deprived of equal protection of the laws.

The Court’s unanimous decision addressed these key questions:

1. Are public schools segregated by race detrimental to black children?
2. Does segregation result in an inferior education for black children?
3. Does the maintenance of segregated public schools violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment?
4. Is the maintenance of segregated public school facilities inherently unequal?
5. What was the intent of the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment regarding distinctions between whites and blacks?
6. Is the holding in \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson} applicable to public education?
7. Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities?

\textbf{Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Brown v. Board of Education\textsuperscript{14}}

Mr. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court:

\ldots In each of these cases [NAACP suits in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware] minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. \ldots This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called “separate but equal” doctrine announced by this Court in Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided substantially equal facilities, even though these facilities be separated. \ldots

The plaintiffs contend that segregated schools are not “equal” and cannot be made “equal,” and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws.

\ldots The most avid proponents of the post-[Civil] War amendments undoubtedly intended them to remove all legal distinctions among “all persons born or naturalized in the United States.”

In the first cases in this Court construing the Fourteenth Amendment, decided shortly after its adoption, the Court interpreted it as prescribing all state imposed discriminations against the Negro race. The doctrine of “separate but equal” did not make its appearance in this Court until 1896 in the \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson}, supra, involving not education but transportation.

In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an
opportunity where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

To separate them [the children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.

... We have now announced that such segregation is a denial of the equal protection of the laws.

VI. YICK WO V. HOPKINS (1886)

In the 1880s, the questions of citizenship and the rights of citizens were raised again by Native Americans and Asian immigrants. While the status of citizenship for African Americans was settled by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, the extent of the privileges and immunities clause still needed clarification. Yick Wo, a Chinese immigrant living in San Francisco, brought suit under the Fourteenth Amendment to see if it covered all persons in the territorial United States regardless of race, color, or nationality.

The Chinese were different than European immigrants because they came to the United States under contract to work as laborers building the transcontinental railroad. When Chinese workers remained, primarily in California, after the completion of the railroad in 1869, Congress became anxious about this "foreign element" that was non-Christian and non-European. Chinese immigrants were seen as an economic threat because they would work for less than white males. To address the issue of economic competition, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882 to prohibit further immigration to the United States. This gave the Chinese the unique status among immigrants of being the only group barred from entry into the United States and barred from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens.

Yick Wo, a subject of the Emperor of China, went to San Francisco in 1861, where he operated a laundry at the same premise for 22 years with consent from the Board of Fire Wardens. When the consent decree expired on October 1, 1885, Yick Wo routinely reapplied to continue to operate a laundry. He was, however, denied a license. Of the over 300 laundries in the city and county of San Francisco, about 240 were owned by Chinese immigrants. Most of these laundries were wooden, the most common construction material used at that time, although it posed a fire hazard. Yick Wo and more than 150 of his countrymen were arrested and charged with carrying on business without having special consent, while those who were not subjects of China and were operating some 80 laundries under similar conditions, were allowed to conduct business.

Yick Wo stated that he and 200 of his countrymen with similar situations petitioned the Board of Supervisors for permission to continue to conduct business in the same buildings they had occupied for more than 20 years. The petitions of all the Chinese were denied, while all petitions of those who were not Chinese were granted (with one exception).

Did this prohibition of the occupation and destruction of the business and property of the Chinese laundrymen in San Francisco constitute the proper regulation of business, or was it discrimination and a violation of important rights secured by the Fourteenth Amendment?

The Court's decision addressed these key questions:

1. Does this municipal ordinance regulating public laundries within the municipality of San Francisco violate the United States Constitution?
2. Does carrying out this municipal ordinance violate the Fourteenth Amendment?
3. Does the guarantee of protection of the Fourteenth Amendment extend to all persons within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States regardless of race, color, or nationality?
4. Are the subjects of the Emperor of China who, temporarily or permanently, reside in the United States entitled to enjoy the protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Yick Wo v. Hopkins

Mr. Justice Matthews delivered the opinion of the Court:
... In both of these cases [Yick Wo v. Hopkins and Wo Lee v. Hopkins] the ordinance involved was simply a prohibition to carry on the washing and ironing of clothes in public laundries and washhouses, within the city and county of San Francisco, from ten o'clock p.m. until six o'clock a.m. of the following day. This provision was held to be purely a police regulation, within the competency of any municipality.

... The rights of the petitioners are not less because they are aliens and subjects of the Emperor of China.

The Fourteenth amendment to the Constitution is not confined to the protection of citizens. It says: "Nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." These provisions are universal in their application, to all persons within the territorial jurisdiction, without regard to any differences of race, or color, or of nationality; and the equal protection from the laws is a pledge of the protection of equal laws....

Though the law itself be fair on its face and impartial in appearance, yet, it is applied and administered by public authority with an evil eye and unequal hand, so as practically to make unjust and illegal discriminations between persons in similar circumstances....

... No reason whatever, except the will of the supervisors, is assigned why they should not be permitted to carry on, in the accustomed manner, their harmless and useful occupation, on which they depend for a livelihood. And while this consent of the supervisors is withheld from them and from two hundred others who have also petitioned, all of whom happened to be Chinese subjects, eighty others, not Chinese subjects, are permitted to carry on similar business under similar conditions. The fact of this discrimination is admitted. No reason for it is shown, ... no reason for it exists except hostility to the race and nationality to which the petitioners belong, and which in the eye of the law is not justified. The discrimination is, therefore, illegal, and the public administration which enforces it is a denial of the equal protection of the laws and a violation of the Fourteenth amendment of the Constitution. The imprisonment of the petitioners is, therefore illegal, and they must be discharged.

The decision in Yick Wo demonstrated the Court's perspective that the Fourteenth Amendment applied to all persons, citizens and noncitizens.

VII. ELK V. WILKINS (1884)

In the late 19th century, Native Americans constituted a problematic class when the Supreme Court considered citizenship. Although Native Americans were the original inhabitants of the territory that became the United States, they were considered outside the concept of citizenship. They were viewed as a separate nation, and described as uncivilized, alien people who were not worthy of citizenship in the political community. As Native Americans were driven from their homeland and pushed farther west, the United States government developed a policy of containment by establishing reservations. Native Americans who lived with their tribes on such reservations were presumed to be members of "not strictly speaking, foreign states, but alien nations." The Constitution made no provisions for naturalizing Native Americans or defining the status of those who chose to live in the territorial United States rather than be assigned to reservations. It was presumed that Native Americans would remain on the reservations. The framers of the Constitution had not given any thought as to when or how a Native American might become a U.S. citizen. When the Naturalization Law of 1790 was written, only Europeans were anticipated as future citizens. The citizenship of Native Americans was not settled until 1924, when a statutory law, not a constitutional amendment, granted citizenship.

Elk v. Wilkins raised the question of citizenship and voting behavior as a privilege of citizenship. In 1857, the Court had easily dismissed Dred Scott's suit on the grounds that he was not a citizen. Since he did not hold citizenship, he could not sue. Minor v. Happersett in 1872 considered the citizenship and voting issue with a female plaintiff. In that case, citizenship was not in doubt but the court stated that citizenship did not automatically confer the right to suffrage. In Elk, a Native American claimed citizenship and the right to vote. Before considering the right to vote, the Court first examined whether Elk was a citizen and the process by which one becomes a citizen.

As midwestern cities emerged from westward expansion in the 1880s, a few Native Americans left their reservations to live and work in those cities. John Elk left his tribe and moved to Omaha, Nebraska, under the jurisdiction of the United States. In April 1880, he attempted to vote for members of the city council. Elk met the residency requirements in Nebraska and Douglas County for voting. Claiming that he complied with all of the statutory provisions, Elk asserted that under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amend-
ments, he was a citizen of the United States who was entitled to exercise the franchise, regardless of race or color. He further claimed that Wilkins, the voter registrar, "designedly, corruptly, willfully, and maliciously" refused to register him for the sole reason that he was a Native American.

The Court's decision addressed these key questions:

1. Is a Native American still a member of an Indian tribe when he voluntarily separates himself from his tribe and seeks residence among the white citizens of the state?
2. What was the intent of the Fourteenth Amendment regarding who could become a citizen?
3. Can Native Americans become naturalized citizens?
4. Can Native Americans become citizens of the United States without the consent of the U.S. government?
5. Must Native Americans adopt the habits of a "civilized" life before they become U.S. citizens?
6. Is a Native American who is taxed a citizen?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in *Elk v. Wilkins* 16

Mr. Justice Gray delivered the opinion of the Court.

... The plaintiff ... relies on the first clause of the first section of the Fourteenth amendment of the Constitution of the United States, by which "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside"; and on the Fifteenth amendment, which provides that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

... The question then is, whether an Indian, born a member of the Indian tribes within the United States, is, merely by reason of his birth within the United States, and of his afterwards voluntarily separating himself from his tribe and taking up his residence among white citizens, a citizen of the United States, within the meaning of the first section of the Fourteenth amendment of the Constitution.

... The Indian tribes, being within the territorial limits of the United States, were not, strictly speaking, foreign States; but they were alien nations, distinct political communities, with whom the United States might and habitually did deal, as they thought fit, either through treaties made by the President and Senate, or through acts of Congress in the ordinary forms of legislation. The members of those tribes owed immediate allegiance to their several tribes, and were not a part of the United States. They were in a dependent condition, a state of pujillage, resembling that of a ward to his guardian.

... They were never deemed citizens of the United States, except under explicit provisions of treaty or statute to that effect, either declaring a certain tribe, or such members of it as chose to remain behind on the removal of the tribe westward, to be citizens, or authorizing individuals of particular tribes to become citizens. ...

This [opening] section of the Fourteenth amendment contemplates two sources of citizenship, and two sources only: birth and naturalization.

... Slavery having been abolished, and the persons formerly held as slaves made citizens. ... But Indians not taxed are still excluded from the count [U.S. Census count for apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives], 17 for the reason that they are not citizens. Their absolute exclusion from the basis of representation, in which all other persons are now included, is wholly inconsistent with their being considered citizens.

... Such Indians, then, not being citizens by birth, can only become so in the second way mentioned in the Fourteenth amendment, by being "naturalized in the United States," by or under some treaty or statute.

... The treaty of 1867 with the Kansas Indians strikingly illustrates the principle that no one can become a citizen of a nation without its consent, and directly contradicts the supposition that a member of an Indian tribe can at will be alternately a citizen of the United States and a member of the tribe.

... But the question whether any Indian tribes, or any members thereof, have become so far advanced in civilization, that they should be let out of the state of pujillage, and admitted to the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, is a question to be decided by the nation whose wards they are and whose citizens they seek to become, and not by each Indian for himself.

... And in a later case [Judge Deady in the District Court of the United States for the District of Oregon] said: "But an Indian cannot make himself a citizen of the United States without the consent and co-operation of the government. The fact that he has abandoned his nomadic life or tribal relations, and adopted the habits and manners of civilized people, may be a good reason why he should be made a citizen of the United States, but does not of itself make him one. To be a citizen of the United States is a political privilege which no one, not born to, can assume without its consent in some form.

Mr. Justice Harlan in the dissenting opinion:

... We submit that the petition does sufficiently
show that the plaintiff is taxed, that is, belongs to the class which, by the laws of Nebraska, are subject to taxation.

... The plaintiff is a citizen and bona fide resident of Nebraska... He is subject to taxation, and is taxed, in that State. Further: The plaintiff has become so far incorporated with the mass of the people of Nebraska that... he constitutes a part of her militia.

By the act of April 9, 1866, entitled "An Act to protect all persons in the United States in their civil rights, and furnish means for their vindication" (14 Stat. 27), it is provided that "all persons born in the United States and not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians not taxed, are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States."... Beyond question, by that act, national citizenship was conferred directly upon all persons in this country, of whatever race (excluding only "Indians not taxed"), who were born within the territorial limits of the United States, and were not subject to any foreign power. Surely every one must admit that an Indian, residing in one of the States, and subject to taxation there, became by force alone of the act of 1866, a citizen of the United States, although he may have been, when born, a member of a tribe.

... If he did not acquire national citizenship on abandoning his tribe (moving from the reservation) and... by residence in one of the States, subject to the complete jurisdiction of the United States, then the Fourteenth amendment has wholly failed to accomplish, in respect of the Indian race, what, we think, was intended by it, and there is still in this country a despised and rejected class of persons, with no nationality; who born in our territory, owing no allegiance to foreign power, and subject, as residents of the States, to all the burdens of government, are yet not members of any political community nor entitled to any of the rights, privileges, or immunities of citizens of the United States.

In all, the Court never addressed Elk's right to vote because the primary question involved Elk's citizenship. By excluding him from citizenship because he had not been naturalized and because there was no provision for naturalization, John Elk was left outside of the political community as was Dred Scott.

VIII. LAU V. NICHOLS (1974)

In the 19th century, Native Americans and Asian immigrants sought to exercise rights under the Fourteenth Amendment although it had been designed explicitly to protect blacks. In the 20th century, issues first raised by African Americans, such as equality in public education, again presented other minority groups with an opportunity to test their rights under the Constitution.

Brown v. Board of Education forced the Court to consider the narrow question of the distribution of resources between black and white school systems. The Brown decision addressed only education. It did not extend to the other areas of segregation in American society, such as the segregation of public transportation (e.g., buses) or public accommodations (e.g., restaurants and hotels). Indeed, Brown had not even specified how the integration of the school system was to take place. All of these questions were taken up by the Civil Rights movement that followed the Brown decision.

Once the separate but equal doctrine was nullified in education, immigrants raised other issues of equality. In the 1970s, suits were brought on behalf of the children of illegal immigrants, non-English-speaking children of Chinese ancestry, and children of low-income parents.

In Lau v. Nichols, a non-English-speaking minority group questioned equality in public education. The case was similar to Brown because it concerned public education, the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the suit was brought on behalf of minors; but the two cases also differed in many respects. The 1954 decision in Brown was part of a series of court cases attacking segregated facilities primarily in southern states. It addressed only the issues of black/white interaction.

In Lau v. Nichols, a suit was brought on behalf of children of Chinese ancestry who attended public schools in San Francisco. Although the children did not speak English, their classes in school were taught entirely in that language. (Some of the children received special instruction in the English language; others did not.) The suit did not specifically ask for bilingual education, nor did the Court require it, but Lau led to the development of such programs. In bilingual education, the curriculum is taught in children's native language, but they are also given separate instruction in the English language, and over time they are moved into English throughout their courses.

The Lau decision hinged in part on Department of Health, Education, and Welfare guidelines that prohibited discrimination in federally assisted programs. The decision was narrow because it instructed only the lower court to provide appropriate relief. The Court's ruling did not guarantee minority language rights, nor did it require bilingual education.

The Court's decision addressed these key questions:
1. Does a public school system that provides for instruction only in English violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment?

2. Does a public school system that provides for instruction only in English violate section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

3. Do Chinese-speaking students who are in the minority receive fewer benefits from the school system than the English-speaking majority?

4. Must a school system that has a minority of students who do not speak English provide bilingual instruction?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Lau v. Nichols

Mr. Justice Douglas delivered the opinion of the Court:

The San Francisco, California, school system was integrated in 1971 as a result of a federal court decree. The District Court found that there are 2,856 students of Chinese ancestry in the school system who do not speak English. Of those who have that language deficiency, about 1,000 are given supplemental courses in the English language. About 1,800 however, do not receive that instruction.

This class suit brought by non-English-speaking Chinese students against officials responsible for the operation of the San Francisco Unified School District seeks relief against the unequal educational opportunities, which are alleged to violate, inter alia, the Fourteenth Amendment. No specific remedy is urged upon us.

The Court of Appeals holding that there was no violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment or of section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 reasoned that "[e]very student brings to the starting line of his educational career different advantages and disadvantages caused in part by social, economic and cultural background, created and continued completely apart from any contribution by the school system." . . . Section 71 of the California Education Code states that "English shall be the basic language of instruction in all schools." That section permits a school district to determine "when and under what circumstances instruction may be given bilingually." . . .

Under these state-imposed standards there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.

. . . We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.

We do not reach the Equal Protection Clause argument which has been advanced but rely solely on section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. section 2000d, to reverse the Court of Appeals.

That section bans discrimination based "on the ground of race, color, or national origin, in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The school district involved in this litigation receives large amounts of federal financial assistance. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), which has authority to promulgate regulations prohibiting discrimination in federally assisted school systems, in 1968 issued one guideline that "[s]chool systems are responsible for assuring that students of a particular race, color, or national origin are not denied the opportunity to obtain the education generally obtained by other students in the system." In 1970 HEW made the guidelines more specific, requiring school districts that were federally funded "to rectify the language deficiency in order to open" the instruction to students who had "linguistic deficiencies." . . .

It seems obvious that the Chinese-speaking minority receive fewer benefits than the English-speaking majority from respondents' school system which denies them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program—all earmarks of the discrimination banned by the regulations.

Lau differed from Brown because it was decided not on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment but on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In reference to Brown, the justices noted that equality of treatment was not achieved by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, or curriculum. Lau underscores the idea that equality may not be achieved by treating different categories of people in the same way.

IX. SAN ANTONIO SCHOOL DISTRICT v. RODRIGUEZ (1973)

The 1973 case of San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez raised the question of equality in public education from another perspective. As was the case in Brown and Lau, the Fourteenth Amendment required interpretation. However, unlike the earlier cases, the issue was the financing of local public schools.

Education is not a right specified in the Constitution. Under a federal system, education is a local matter in each state. This allows for the possibility of vast differences among states and even within states on the quality of instruction, methods of financing, and treatment of nonwhite students. Whereas the Brown decision examined
inequality between races, *San Antonio* considered inequality based on financial resources through local property taxes. *San Antonio* raised the question of the consequence of the unequal distribution of wealth among Texas school districts. As with *Brown* and *Lau*, minors were involved; however, the issue was not race or language instruction but social class. Did the Texas school system discriminate against the poor?

Traditionally, the states have financed schools based on property tax assessments. Since wealth is not evenly distributed, some communities are able to spend more on education and provide greater resources to children. This is the basis of the *San Antonio* case, where the charge was that children in less affluent communities necessarily received an inferior education because those communities had fewer resources to draw on. The Rodriguez family contended that the Texas school system of financing public schools through local property taxes denied them equal protection of the laws in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Financing public schools in Texas entailed state and local contributions. About half of the revenues were derived from a state-funded program that provided a minimal educational base; each district then supplemented state aid with a property tax. The Rodriguez family brought a class action suit on behalf of school children who claimed to be members of poor families who resided in school districts with a low property tax base. The contention was that the Texas system’s reliance on local property taxation favored the more affluent and violated equal protection requirements because of disparities between districts in per-pupil expenditures.

The Court’s decision addressed these key questions:

1. Does Texas’s system of financing public school education by use of a property tax violate the Equal Protection Clause (Section 1) of the Fourteenth Amendment?
2. Does the Equal Protection Clause apply to wealth?
3. Is education a fundamental right?
4. Does this state law impinge on a fundamental right?
5. Is a state system for financing public education by a property tax that results in interdistrict disparities in per-pupil expenditures unconstitutionally arbitrary under the Equal Protection Clause?

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**Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez**

Mr. Justice Powell delivered the opinion of the Court:

... The District Court held that the Texas system [of financing public education] discriminates on the basis of wealth in the manner in which education is provided for its people. Finding that wealth is a “suspect” classification and that education is a “fundamental” interest, the District Court held that the Texas system could be sustained only if the State could show that it was premised upon some compelling state interest.

... We must decide, first, whether the Texas system of financing public education operates to the disadvantage of some suspect class or impinges upon a fundamental right explicitly or implicitly protected by the Constitution, thereby requiring strict judicial scrutiny. If so, the Texas scheme must still be examined to determine whether it rationally furthers some legitimate, articulated state purpose and therefore does not constitute an invidious discrimination in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

... In concluding that strict judicial scrutiny was required, the [District] court relied on decisions dealing with the rights of indigents to equal treatment in the criminal trial and appellate processes, and on cases disapproving wealth restrictions on the right to vote. Those cases, the District Court concluded, established wealth as a suspect classification. Finding that a local property tax system discriminated on the basis of wealth, it regarded those precedents as controlling. It then reasoned, based on decisions of this Court affirming the undeniable importance of education, that there is a fundamental right to education and that, absent some compelling state justification, the Texas system could not stand.

We are unable to agree that this case, which in significant aspects is *sui generis*, may be so neatly fitted under the Equal Protection Clause. Indeed, we find neither the suspect-classification nor the fundamental-interest analysis persuasive.

The wealth discrimination discovered by the District Court in this case, and by several other courts that have recently struck down school financing in other States, is quite unlike any of the forms of wealth discrimination heretofore reviewed by this Court.

... First, in support of their charge that the system discriminates against the “poor,” appellants have made no effort to demonstrate that it operates to the peculiar disadvantage of any class fairly definable as indigent, or as composed of persons whose incomes are beneath any designated poverty
level. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the poorest families are not necessarily clustered in the poorest property districts... 

Second, neither appellees nor the District Court addressed the fact that... lack of personal resources has not occasioned an absolute deprivation of the desired benefit. The argument here is not that the children in districts having relatively low assessable property values are receiving no public education; rather, it is that they are receiving a poorer quality education than that available to children in districts having more assessable wealth. Apart from the unsettled and disputed question whether the quality of education may be determined by the amount of money expended for it, a sufficient answer to appellee's argument is that, at least where wealth is involved, the Equal Protection Clause does not require absolute equality or precisely equal advantages...

For these two reasons... the disadvantaged class is not susceptible of identification in traditional terms....

... (I)It is clear that appellee's suit asks this Court to extend its most exacting scrutiny to review a system that allegedly discriminates against a large, diverse, and amorphous class, unified only by the common factor of residence in districts that happen to have less taxable wealth than other districts. The system of alleged discrimination and the class it defines have none of the traditional indicia of suspectness: the class is not saddled with such disabilities, or subjected to such a history of purposeful unequal treatment, or relegated to such a position of political powerlessness as to command extraordinary protection from the majoritarian political process.

We thus conclude that the Texas system does not operate to the peculiar disadvantage of any suspect class....

Education, of course, is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution. Nor do we find any basis for saying it is implicitly so protected....

In sum, to the extent that the Texas system of school financing results in unequal expenditures between children who happen to reside in different districts, we cannot say that such disparities are the product of a system that is so irrational as to be invidiously discriminatory....

Mr. Justice White, with whom Mr. Justice Douglas and Mr. Justice Brennan join, dissenting:

... In my view, the parents and children in Edgewood, and in like districts, suffer from an invidious discrimination violative of the Equal Protection Clause....

There is no difficulty in identifying the class that is subject to the alleged discrimination and that is entitled to the benefits of the Equal Protection Clause. I need go no further than the parents and children in the Edgewood district, who are plaintiffs here and who assert that they are entitled to the same choice as Alamo Heights to augment local expenditures for schools but are denied that choice by state law. This group constitutes a class sufficiently definite to invoke the protection of the Constitution....

In San Antonio v. Rodriguez, the Court did not find that the differences between school districts constituted invidious discrimination. A majority of the justices felt that Texas satisfied constitutional standards under the Equal Protection Clause. On the other hand, four justices in dissenting opinions saw a class (the poor) that was subject to discrimination and that lacked the protection of the Constitution.


In most of the cases we have considered, plaintiffs have sued on the basis that their rights under the Fourteenth Amendment were violated. However, cases can reach the Supreme Court by several routes, one of which is a writ of certiorari, which is directed at an inferior court to bring the record of a case into a superior court for re-examination and review. This was the case in Bowers v. Hardwick, in which the constitutionality of a Georgia sodomy statute was challenged. This became a key case in the battle for constitutional rights for gay women and men.

The case of Bowers v. Hardwick began on the issue of privacy because the behavior in question took place in Michael Hardwick's home. In deciding the case, however, the justices shifted from the issue of privacy to question whether gays have a fundamental right to engage in consensual sex.

Michael Hardwick's suit was based on the following facts. On August 3, 1982, a police officer went to Hardwick's home to serve Hardwick a warrant for failure to pay a fine. Hardwick's roommate answered the door, but was not sure if Hardwick was at home. The roommate allowed the officer to enter and approach Hardwick's bedroom. The officer found the bedroom door partly open and observed Hardwick engaged in oral sex with another man. The officer arrested both men, charged them with sodomy, and held them in the local jail for 10 hours.

The Georgia sodomy statute under which the men were charged made "any sexual act involving the sex organs of one person and the mouth or anus of another" a felony punishable by imprisonment for up to 20 years. When the district
attorney decided not to submit the case to a grand jury, Hardwick brought suit attacking the constitutionality of the Georgia statute. Later, a divided court of appeals held that the Georgia statute violated Hardwick’s fundamental rights. The attorney general of Georgia appealed that judgment to the Supreme Court.

The Court’s decision on the case was split. Five justices ruled that the constitutional right of privacy did not apply to Hardwick’s case; four argued that it did. While the Georgia statute did not specify that only homosexual sodomy was prohibited, the Court’s majority opinion was framed in those terms. (Most legal prohibitions are directed at nonprocreative acts irrespective of the sex of the participants.) The majority opinion also equated consensual sex within the home to criminal conduct within the home, an equation criticized by both gay rights activists and the dissenting justices.

[The majority opinion] emphasized that the home does not confer immunity for criminal conduct, comparing gay sex first to drugs, firearms, and stolen goods and then to adultery, incest, and bigamy. In so doing, the Court evoked images of dissolution, fear, seizure, and instability. . . . [and] the stereotypical fear of gay men as predators and child molesters. . . . The majority [opinion] advances, mostly by implication, its view of gay sexuality as unrelated to recognized forms of sexual activity or intimate relationships, and as exploitative, predatory, threatening to personal and social stability. [Writing for the dissent] Justice Blackmun excoriates the majority’s choice of analogies and its failure to explain why it did not use non-threatening analogies such as private, consensual heterosexual activity or even sodomy within marriage for comparison.

While the majority argued that the past criminalization of sodomy argued for its continued criminalization, critics responded that “Whereas the task of the Court was to decide whether the criminalization of sodomy is consistent with the Constitution, the majority treated the fact of past criminalization as determinative. . . . It had no answer to Justice Blackmun’s contention ‘that by such lights, the Court should have no authority to invalidate miscegenation laws.’”

The Court’s decision addressed these key questions:

1. Does Georgia’s sodomy law violate the fundamental rights of gays?
2. Does the Constitution confer the fundamental right to engage in homosexual sodomy?
3. Is Georgia’s sodomy law selectively being enforced against gays?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in Bowers v. Hardwick

Mr. Justice White delivered the opinion of the Court:

This case does not require a judgment on whether laws against sodomy between consenting adults in general, or between homosexuals in particular, are wise or desirable. . . . The issue presented is whether the Federal Constitution confers a fundamental right upon homosexuals to engage in sodomy and hence invalidates the laws of the many States that still make such contact illegal and have done so for a very long time.

We first register our disagreement with the Court of Appeals and with respondent that the Court’s prior cases have construed the Constitution to confer a right of privacy that extends to homosexual sodomy. . . .

Precedent aside, however, respondent would have us announce, as the Court of Appeals did, a fundamental right to engage in homosexual sodomy. This we are quite unwilling to do. . . .

It is obvious to us that neither of these formulations [Palko v. Connecticut, 302 U.S. 319 (1937) and Moore v. East Cleveland, 431 U.S. 494 (1977)] would extend a fundamental right to homosexuals to engage in acts of consensual sodomy. Proscriptions against that conduct have ancient roots. . . .

Sodomy was a criminal offense at common law and was forbidden by the laws of the original thirteen States when they ratified the Bill of Rights. In 1868, when the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified, all but 5 of the 37 States in the Union had criminal sodomy laws. In fact, until 1961, all 50 States outlawed sodomy, and today 24 States and the District of Columbia continue to provide criminal penalties for sodomy performed in private and between consenting adults. . . . Against this background, to claim that a right to engage in such conduct is “deeply rooted in this Nation’s history and tradition” or “implicit in the concept of ordered liberty” is, at best, facetious. . . .

Respondent . . . asserts that the result should be different where the homosexual conduct occurs in the privacy of the home. He relies on Stanley v. Georgia, 394 U.S. 557, (1969) . . . where the Court held that the First Amendment prevents conviction for possessing and reading obscene material in the privacy of one’s home: “If the First Amendment means anything, it means that a State has no business telling a man, sitting alone in his house, what books he may read or what films he may watch . . . .”

Stanley did protect conduct that would not have been protected outside the home, and it partially prevented the enforcement of state obscenity laws; but the decision was firmly grounded in the First Amendment. The right pressed upon us here has no similar support in the text of the Constitution, and
it does not qualify for recognition under the prevailing principles for construing the Fourteenth Amendment. Its limits are also difficult to discern.

Plainly enough, otherwise illegal conduct is not always immunized whenever it occurs in the home. Victimless crimes, such as the possession and use of illegal drugs, do not escape the law where they are committed at home. Stanley itself recognized that its holding offered no protection for the possession in the home of drugs, firearms, or stolen goods. And if respondent's submission is limited to the voluntary sexual conduct between consenting adults, it would be difficult, except by fiat, to limit the claimed right to homosexual conduct while leaving exposed to prosecution adultery, incest, and other sexual crimes even though they are committed in the home. We are unwilling to start down that road.

Justice Blackmun, with whom Justice Brennan, Justice Marshall, and Justice Stevens join, dissenting:

This case is no more about a "fundamental right to engage in homosexual sodomy," as the Court purports to declare, than Stanley v. Georgia, 394 U.S. 557 (1969), was about a fundamental right to watch obscene movies. Rather, this case is about "the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men," namely, "the right to be let alone." Olmstead v. United States, 277 U.S. 438, (1928) (Brandeis, J., dissenting).

The statute at issue, Ga. Code Ann. section 16-6-2 (1984), denies individuals the right to decide for themselves whether to engage in particular forms of private, consensual sexual activity. The Court concludes that section 16-6-2 is valid essentially because "the laws of... many States... still make such conduct illegal and have done so for a very long time." (Holmes, J., dissenting). Like Justice Holmes [dissenting in Lochner v. New York, 198 U.S. 45 (1905)], I believe that "[i]t is revolting to have no better reason for a rule of law than that it was laid down in the time of Henry IV. It is still more revolting if the grounds upon which it was laid down have vanished long since, and the rule simply persists from blind imitation of the past." Holmes, The Path of Law, 10 Harvard Law Review 457, 469 (1897). I believe we must analyze Hardwick’s claim in the light of the values that underlie the constitutional right to privacy. If that right means anything, it means that, before Georgia can prosecute its citizens for making choices about the most intimate aspects of their lives, it must do more than assert that the choice they have made is an "abominable crime not fit to be named among Christians."

Like the statute that is challenged in this case, the rationale of the Court’s opinion applies equally to the prohibited conduct regardless of whether the parties who engage in it are married or unmarried, or are of the same or different sexes. Sodomy was condemned as an odious and sinful type of behavior during the formative period of the common law. That condemnation was equally damning for heterosexual and homosexual sodomy. Moreover, it provided no special exemption for married couples. The license to cohabit and to produce legitimate offspring simply did not include any permission to engage in sexual conduct that was considered a "crime against nature."

The Court’s decision did not uphold Michael Hardwick’s contention that his sexual conduct in the privacy of his own home was constitutionally protected. While the decision was seen as a blow to the assertion of gay rights, the majority’s narrow one-vote margin also indicated the Court’s shifting opinion on this issue.

XI. REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA v. BAKKE (1978)

The Supreme Court has reviewed several cases concerning equitable treatment in public education. Key cases include racially separate public schools (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954); the practice of English-only instruction for Chinese students in public schools (Lau v. Nichols, 1974); and the practice of operating public schools based solely on revenue from local property taxes (San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez, 1973).

African Americans not only had to fight for equity in public schools but also had to sue to gain admission to law and medical schools in state universities. See Simpson v. Oklahoma, 1948; Missouri ex rel Gaines, 1938; and Sweatt v. Painter, 1950.

In 1978, race-based admissions became an issue again when a white person sued for admission to the medical school at the University of California at Davis. The case of The Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, however, must be seen in light of the policy of affirmative action, which sought to redress historic injustices against racial minorities and other specified groups by providing educational and employment opportunities to members of these groups.

In 1968, the University of California at Davis opened a medical school with a track admission policy for a 100-seat class. In 1974, applicants who identified themselves as economically and/or educationally disadvantaged or a member of a minority group (blacks, Chicanos, Asians, American Indians) were reviewed by a special
committee. They could also compete for the remaining 84 seats. However, no disadvantaged white was ever admitted to the school through the special admissions program, although some applied. Bakke, a white male, applied to the medical school in 1973 and 1974 under the general admissions program. He was rejected both times because he did not meet the requisite cutoff score. In both years, special applicants with significantly lower scores than Bakke were admitted. After his second rejection Bakke sued for admission to the medical school, alleging that the special admissions program excluded him on the basis of his race in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, a provision of the California Constitution, and section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which provides that no person shall, on the ground of race or color, be excluded from participating in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The California Supreme Court applied a strict-scrutiny standard. It concluded that the special admissions program was not the least intrusive means of achieving the goals of the admittedly compelling state interests of integrating the medical profession and increasing the number of doctors willing to serve minority patients. The California court held that Davis’s special admissions program violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The Davis Medical School was ordered to admit Bakke.

The Court’s divided opinion addressed these key questions:

1. Does the University of California, Davis Medical School’s admission policy violate the Fourteenth Amendment?
2. Does giving preference to a group of nonwhite applicants constitute discrimination?
3. Does the University of California, Davis Medical School use a racial classification that is suspect?
4. Was Bakke denied admission to the University of California, Davis Medical School on the basis of race?
5. Can race be used as a criterion for admission to a university?

**Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in The Regents of the University of California v. Bakke**

Mr. Justice Powell delivered the opinion of the Court:

The guarantees of the Fourteenth Amendment extend to all persons. Its language is explicit: “No State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” . . . The guarantee of equal protection cannot mean one thing when applied to one individual and something else when applied to a person of another color. . . .

. . . the [Fourteenth] Amendment itself was framed in universal terms, without reference to color, ethnic origin, or condition of prior servitude.

Petitioner [University of California, Davis] urges us to adopt for the first time a more restrictive view of the Equal Protection Clause and hold that discrimination against members of the white "majority" cannot be suspect if its purpose can be characterized as "benign."

. . . Moreover, there are serious problems of justice connected with the idea of preference itself. First, it may not always be clear that a so-called preference is in fact benign. . . . Second, preferential programs may only reinforce common stereotypes holding that certain groups are unable to achieve success without special protection based on a factor having no relationship to individual worth. Third, there is a measure of inequity in forcing innocent persons in respondent’s position to bear the burdens of redressing grievances not of their making.

. . . When a classification denies an individual opportunities or benefits enjoyed by others solely because of his race or ethnic background, it must be regarded as suspect.

If petitioner’s purpose is to assure within its student body some specified percentage of a particular group merely because of its race or ethnic origin, such a preferential purpose must be rejected . . . Preferring members of any one group for no reason other than race or ethnic origin is discrimination for its own sake. This the Constitution forbids.

. . . [A] goal asserted by petitioner is the attainment of a diverse student body. This clearly is a constitutionally permissible goal for an institution of higher education. Academic freedom, though not a specifically enumerated constitutional right, long has been viewed as a special concern of the First Amendment . . .

Ethnic diversity, however, is only one element in a range of factors a university properly may consider in attaining the goal of a heterogeneous student body.

It may be assumed that the reservation of a specified number of seats in each class for individuals from the preferred ethnic groups would contribute to the attainment of considerable ethnic diversity in the student body. But petitioner’s argument that this is the only effective means of serving the interest of diversity is seriously flawed . . . Petitioner’s special admissions program, focused
solely on ethnic diversity, would hinder rather than further attainment of genuine diversity.

... In summary, it is evident that the Davis special admissions program involves the use of an explicit racial classification never before countenanced by this Court. It tells applicants who are not Negro, Asian, or Chicano that they are totally excluded from a specific percentage of the seats in the class.

The fatal flaw in petitioner's preferential program is its disregard of individual rights as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. Such rights are not absolute.

Mr. Justice Brennan, Mr. Justice White, Mr. Justice Marshall, and Mr. Justice Blackmun, concurring in part and dissenting in part:

We conclude ... that racial classifications are not per se invalid under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Unquestionably we have held that a government practice or statute which restricts "fundamental rights" or which contains "suspect classifications" is to be subjected to "strict scrutiny" and can be justified only if it furthers a compelling government purpose. ... But no fundamental right is involved here. Nor do whites as a class have any of the "traditional indicia of suspectness; the class is not saddled with such disabilities, or subjected to such a history of purposeful unequal treatment, or relegate to such a history of purposeful unequal treatment, or relegate to such position of political powerlessness as to command extraordinary protection from the majoritarian political process." ...

Certainly ... Davis had a sound basis for believing that the problem of under-representation of minorities was substantial and chronic... Until at least 1973, the practice of medicine in this country was, in fact, if not in law, largely the prerogative of whites. In 1950, for example, while Negroes constituted 10% of the total population, Negro physicians constituted only 2.2% of the total number of physicians. The overwhelming majority of these ... were educated in two predominantly Negro medical schools, Howard and Meharry. By 1970, the gap between the proportion of Negroes in medicine and their proportion in the population had widened: The number of Negroes employed in medicine remained frozen at 2.2% while the Negro population had increased to 11.1%. The number of Negro admittes to predominantly white medical schools, moreover, had declined in absolute numbers during the years 1955 to 1964.

Moreover, Davis had very good reason to believe that the national pattern of under-representation of minorities in medicine would be perpetuated if it retained a single admissions standard. ...

Davis clearly could conclude that the serious and persistent under-representation of minorities in medicine depicted by these statistics is the result of handicaps under which minority applicants labor as a consequence of ... deliberate, purposeful discrimination against minorities in education and in society generally, as well as in the medical profession. ...

It is not even claimed that Davis' program in any way operates to stigmatize or single out any discrete ... or even any identifiable, nonminority group. Nor will harm comparable to that imposed upon racial minorities by exclusion or separation on grounds of race be the likely result of the program. ...

Nor was Bakke in any sense stamped as inferior by the Medical School's rejection of him. Indeed, it is conceded by all that he satisfied those criteria regarded by the school as generally relevant to academic performance better than most of the minority members who were admitted. Moreover, there is absolutely no basis for concluding that Bakke's rejection that was a result of Davis' use of racial preference will affect him throughout his life in the same way as the segregation of the Negro schoolchildren in Brown I would have affected them. Unlike discrimination against racial minorities, the use of racial preferences for remedial purposes does not inflict a pervasive injury upon individual whites in the sense that wherever they go or whatever they do there is a significant likelihood that they will be treated as second-class citizens because of their color. ...

In addition, there is simply no evidence that the Davis program discriminated intentionally or unintentionally against any minority group which it purports to benefit. The program does not establish a quota in the invidious sense of a ceiling on the number of minority applicants to be admitted. ...

Finally, Davis' special admissions program cannot be said to violate the Constitution. ...

... we would reverse the judgment of the Supreme Court of California holding the Medical School's special admissions program unconstitutional and directing respondent's admission.

Justices Stevens and Stewart, along with Chief Justice Rehnquist, concurred and dissented in part. They found that the university's special admissions program violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funding assistance. This dissent found that Bakke was not admitted to the Davis Medical School because of his race.

Race-based admissions were again considered in Hopwood v. Texas, a 1994 case in the Western District of Texas. The suit, brought by four white Texas residents, claimed that the affirmative action admissions program of the University of Texas School of Law violated the Equal Protec-
tion Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The district court agreed that the plaintiffs' equal protection rights had been violated, but refused to direct the school to cease making admission decisions based on race. The case was subsequently appealed in the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which held that the University of Texas School of Law could not use race as an admissions factor in order to achieve a diverse student body. The holding of the circuit court stands because the Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

This decision in effect overruled Justice Powell's opinion in Bakke, which held that universities can take account of an applicant's race in some circumstances. He asserted that the goal of achieving a diverse student body was permissible under the Constitution.

XII. PGA TOUR V. CASEY MARTIN (2001)

Historically, disabled people have been thought of as possessed or wicked. Often they were scorned and shut off from society in mental institutions. Today, however, the medical model is the dominant perspective that "those with disabilities have some kind of physical, mental, or emotional defect that not surprisingly limits their performance." Essentially, we don't expect those who are "flawed" to function as well as other people.24

Disabled people constantly face discrimination resulting in exclusion from housing, public buildings, and public transportation. This has prevented them from attending school, visiting museums, shopping, or living without assistance.

Only recently have disabled people used group pressure to achieve their rights. A turning point came in 1962 when Edward V. Roberts, a quadriplegic, won his suit to be admitted to the University of California. After graduating, Roberts established the Center for Independent Living.

In 1990, Congress passed the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibited discrimination against people with physical or mental disability in employment, public accommodations, and transportation.

Casey Martin, a professional golfer, suffers from Klippel-Trenaunay-Weber Syndrome, a degenerative circulatory disorder that causes severe pain in his lower leg, which keeps him from being able to walk for long periods of time.

The PGA, a nonprofit association of professional golfers, sponsors three professional tours. Entry to the PGA tour is by competition in a qualifying school, which is conducted in three stages. During the first two stages, players are allowed to use golf carts. In the third stage, players are required to walk the course. After qualifying for the third and final stage of the 1997 qualifying school, Martin requested permission to use a golf cart. When the PGA denied this request, Martin sued.

The Court's decision addressed these key questions:

1. By participating in the PGA tour does Casey Martin seek to use a place of public accommodations?
2. Is refusing to waive the walking rule in the PGA a violation of making reasonable modifications to its policies to afford such accommodations to individuals with disabilities?
3. Does making such modifications "fundamentally alter the nature" of the accommodations?
4. Have Casey Martin's rights been violated under the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Excerpts from the Supreme Court Decision in PGA Tour v. Casey Martin

Mr. Justice Stevens delivered the opinion of the Court:

The case raises two questions concerning the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to a gifted athlete: first, whether the Act protects access to professional golf tournaments by a qualified entrant with a disability, and second, whether a disabled contestant may be denied the use of a golf cart because it would "fundamentally alter the nature" of the tournaments, to allow him to ride when all other contestants must walk.

There are various ways of gaining entry into particular tours... Most participants, however, earn playing privileges in the PGA TOUR... by way of a three-stage qualifying tournament known as the "Q-School."

... Three sets of rules govern competition in tour events... Those rules do not prohibit the use of golf carts at any time.

... The "Conditions of Competition and Local Rules," often described as the "hard card," apply specifically to petitioner's (PGA) professional tours.

The hard card for the PGA TOUR... requires players to walk the golf course during tournaments, but not during open qualifying rounds. The PGA TOUR hard card provides: "Players shall walk at all times during a stipulated round unless permitted to ride by the PGA TOUR Rules Committee." Additionally, golf carts have not been permitted during the third stage of the Q-School since 1997. [The PGA] added this recent prohibi-
tion in order to “approximate a PGA TOUR event as closely as possible.”

The basic Rules of Golf, the hard cards, . . . apply equally to all players in tour competitions. . . . The key is to have everyone tee off on the first hole under exactly the same conditions and all of them be tested over that 72-hole event under the conditions that exist during those four days of the event.

Casey Martin is a talented golfer. As an amateur he won 17 Oregon Golf Association junior events before he was 15, and won the state championship as a high school senior. He played on the Stanford University golf team that won the 1994 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championship. As a professional, Martin qualified for the NIKE TOUR in 1998 and 1999, and based on his 1999 performance, qualified for the PGA TOUR in 2000. In the 1999 season, he entered 24 events, made the cut 13 times, and had 6 top-10 finishes, coming in second twice and third once.

Martin is also individual with a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Since birth he has been afflicted with Klippel-Trenaunay-Weber Syndrome, a degenerative circulatory disorder. The disease is progressive; it causes severe pain and has atrophied his right leg. During the latter part of his college career, because of the progress of the disease, Martin could no longer walk an 18-hole golf course. Walking not only caused him pain, fatigue, and anxiety, but also created a significant risk of hemorrhaging. . . . For these reasons, Stanford made a written request to the Pacific 10 Conference and the NCAA to waive for Martin their rules requiring players to walk and carry their own clubs. The requests were granted.

When Martin turned pro and entered petitioner’s Q-School, the hard card permitted him to use a cart during his successful progress through the first two stages. He made a request, supported by detailed medical records, for permission to use a golf cart during the third stage. Petitioner refused to review those records or to waive its walking rule for the third stage. Martin therefore filed this action.

Congress enacted the ADA in 1990 to remedy widespread discrimination against disabled individuals. . . . Congress concluded that there was a “compelling need” for a “clear and comprehensive national mandate” to eliminate discrimination against disabled individuals, and to integrate them “into the economic and social mainstream of American life.”

In the ADA, Congress provided that broad mandate. In fact, one of the Act’s “most impressive strengths” has been identified as its “comprehensive character.” . . . accordingly the Act has been described as “a milestone on the path to a more decent, tolerant, progressive society,” . . . the ADA forbids discrimination against disabled individuals in major areas of public life, among them employment, public services, and public accommodations.

Title III of the ADA prescribes, as a “general rule”:

“No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantage or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who . . . operates a place of public accommodation.

. . . It seems apparent, from both the general rule and the comprehensive definition of “public accommodation,” that petitioner’s golf tours and their qualifying rounds fit comfortably within the coverage of Title III, and Martin within its protection. The events occur on “golf courses,” a type of place specifically identified by the Act as a public accommodation.

. . . Our conclusion is consistent with case law in the analogous context of Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. . . . Title II prohibits public accommodations from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

. . . Martin’s claim thus differs from one that might be asserted by players with less serious afflictions that make walking the course uncomfortable or difficult, but not beyond their capacity. In such cases, an accommodation might be reasonable but not necessary. In this case, however, the narrow dispute is whether allowing Martin to use a golf cart, despite the walking requirement that applies to the PGA TOUR, the NIKE TOUR, and the third stage of the Q-School, is a modification that would “fundamentally alter the nature” of those events.

In theory, a modification of petitioner’s golf tournaments might constitute a fundamental alteration in two different ways. It might alter such an essential aspect of the game of golf that it would be unacceptable even if it affected all competitors, equally; changing the diameter of the hole from three to six inches might be such a modification. . . . We are not persuaded that a waiver of the walking rule for Martin would work a fundamental alteration in either sense.

. . . we observe that the use of carts is not itself inconsistent with the fundamental character of the game of golf. From early on, the essence of the game has been shot-making — using clubs to cause a ball to progress from the teeing ground to a hole some distance away with as few strokes as possible. . . . Originally, so few clubs were used that each player could carry them without a bag. Then came golf bags, caddies, carts that were pulled by hand, and eventually motorized carts that carried players as well as clubs. . . . There is nothing in the Rules of Golf that either forbids the use of carts, or penalizes a player for using a cart. That set of rules, as we have observed, is widely accepted in both
the amateur and professional golf world as the rules of the game. The walking rule that is contained in petitioner’s hard cards is not an essential attribute of the game itself.

Indeed, the walking rule is not an indispensable feature of tournament golf either. . . . petitioner permits golf carts to be used in the SENIOR PGA TOUR, the open qualifying events for tournaments, the first two stages of the Q-School, and, until 1997, the third stage of the Q-School as well.

The PGA argument is, first of all, mitigated by the fact that golf is a game in which it is impossible to guarantee that all competitors will play under exactly the same conditions or that an individual’s ability will be the sole determinant of the outcome. For example, changes in the weather may produce harder greens and more head winds for the tournament leader than for his closest pursuers.

. . . the purpose of the walking rule is to subject players to fatigue, which in turn may influence the outcome of the tournaments. Even if the rule does not serve that purpose, it is an unchallenged finding of the District Court that Martin “easily endures greater fatigue even with a cart than his able-bodied competitors do by walking.” . . . The purpose of the walking rule is therefore not compromised in the slightest by allowing Martin to use a cart.

The provisions of the ADA are subject to reinterpretation in every Supreme Court case. In January 2002 the Supreme Court decided in Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky Inc. v. Williams that Williams, an employee who was suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome, was not disabled. Although she requested exemptions from certain tasks at the plant, she was not considered disabled under the ADA because her condition did not limit major life activities such as walking, seeing, and hearing.

NOTES

1. Privileges and immunities refer to the ability of one state to discriminate against the citizens of another state. A resident of one state cannot be denied legal protection, access to the courts, or property rights in another state.

2. In Smith v. Allwright, 321 U.S. 649 (1944), the Supreme Court held that a 1927 Texas law that authorized political parties to establish criteria for membership in the state Democratic party violated the Fifteenth Amendment. In effect, the criteria excluded nonwhites from the Democratic party. Since only party members could vote in the primary election, the result was a whites-only primary. The Democratic party so dominated politics in the southern states after the Civil War that winning the primary was equivalent to winning the general election.

3. Americans of African descent have been called blacks, Negroes, colored, or African Americans, depending on the historical period.

4. 19 Howard 393 (1877).

5. The Nineteenth Amendment that was ratified on August 18, 1920, stated, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

6. 21 Wallace 162 (1875).


8. Hodes, p. 45.

9. Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy. New York: Harper and Row (2nd ed. 1962 [1944]), pp. 1073–74, as quoted in Hodes, p. 29. This same biblical ground has yielded the idea that a woman is an extension of her husband and his status.

10. The states under military rule were Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

11. The term colored was used in Louisiana to describe persons of mixed race who had some African ancestry.


13. Restrictive covenants were written in deeds restricting the use of the land. Covenants could prohibit the sale of land to nonwhites or non-Christians.


15. 118 U.S. 356 (1886).

16. 112 U.S. 94 (1884).

17. Native Americans and slaves posed a problem when taking the census count, which was the basis for apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Some states stood to lose representation if some of their slave or Native American population was not counted. Blacks were counted as three-fifths of a white man, and only those Native Americans who were taxed were counted.


