

# EXPLORATIONS IN ETHNIC STUDIES



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*Explorations in Ethnic Studies* is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, ethnic groups, intergroup relations, and the cultural life of ethnic minorities. The editorial staff welcomes manuscripts that are in concert with the objectives and goals of the National Association of Interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies. Contributors should demonstrate the integration of theory and practice.

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# Table of Contents

<i>African and Pacific Literature: A Comparative Study</i> by Kristine L. Martin .....	1
Critiques	
R. Dennis Stewart .....	11
James H. Williams .....	12
Mary Sisney .....	13
<i>On the Street Be Singin'</i> by Jeff Langford .....	15
<i>My Uncle Played the Sax</i> by Louis E. Bryan .....	15
<i>Mrs. Cameron's Baby</i> by Louis E. Bryan .....	15
<i>Some Symbols of Identity of Byzantine Catholics</i> by Robert J. Skovira .....	16
Critiques	
Michele Zak .....	30
Zora Devrnja Zimmerman .....	31
<i>Sonnets Polonaise II</i> by Albert Solomon .....	34
<i>Caneburning</i> by Sheila Rosecrans .....	35
<i>At Monticello</i> by Margaret C. Blaker .....	35
<i>Racial Intelligence Testing and the Mexican</i> <i>People</i> by Gilbert G. Gonzalez .....	36
Critiques	
Anthony J. Cortese .....	50
Olivia Mercado .....	51
Richard Santillan .....	54
<i>Blind Man's Point of View</i> by J.L. (Pat) Roof .....	55
Contributors .....	56



## African and Pacific Literature: A Comparative Study\*

Kristine L. Martin

The new nations of Africa and the islands of the South Pacific have much in common, despite their ethnic and cultural diversity and the vast distance that separates them. The literature which has developed over the past thirty years in Africa and over the past ten in the Pacific mirrors their shared experiences and outlook. The authors from both regions have acted as spokespersons for their people, voicing concerns about their future as individuals as well as members of a politically viable ethnic community.

Both regions have attracted the attention of seekers of adventure and fortune. In quest of the exotic and the dangerous, western travellers flocked to Africa and the Pacific in an attempt not only to escape their own safe, predictable cultures, but also to find their own identities. The frequencies with which the theme of the quest for identity appears in European travel and adventure fiction set in Africa or the Pacific leads one to suspect that the seeker is hopeful of finding a personal identity which, should it ever be found, will somehow be more interesting simply because it is sought in bizarre surroundings.

The natives of these regions, when or if they appear in this type of novel, are invariably presented superficially. They provide background color primarily, and their strange, paganistic rituals are emphasized, as in James Michener's novels. Natives are merely a source of cheap curiosity. Herman Melville's semi-autobiographical novel, *Typee*, set in the Marquesas Islands, also illustrates this fascination with the exotic. The Marquesans, reputedly cannibals, who adopt the leading character are presented as simple, child-like creatures with inexplicable, violent tendencies. The Marquesans remain inexplicable because Melville perceives them through European, nineteenth-century eyes, failing to endow the people with truly human qualities.

The same tendency is reflected in the action of both the missionaries who went to Africa and the Pacific to reap a harvest of souls and the colonial masters who went to gather treasure and create empires in the name of a civilizing mission—the “white man's burden.” The colonial experiences of these regions left the colonized people irrevocably altered. The writers of the newly independent nations, after one hundred years of colonization, are now voicing their bitterness, frustration, and longing as they attempt to redefine who they are.

The literary modes which have emerged from Africa and the Pacific fit well within the European tradition. The works selected for

discussion here are all written in English and have as a major theme, an exploration of individual or social consciousness. In general, each writer's purpose is to describe the local society or to prescribe a particular mode of cultural behavior in order to strengthen beliefs, clarify issues and awaken a response in the intended audience. Chinua Achebe, perhaps Africa's most widely-read novelist, points to the need for African writers to express their social commitment in their work:

African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many people all but lost during the colonial period and it is this that they must now regain. The worst thing that can happen to any people is the loss of their dignity and self-respect. The writer's duty is to help them regain it by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost.<sup>1</sup>

The artist becomes a means of synthesizing two worlds: the past, disrupted by colonialism, and the present, with its inherent problems following independence. The novels of two African writers, Chinua Achebe of Nigeria and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o of Kenya, illustrate many of the dominant themes in African literature.

The characters in Achebe's four novels become increasingly alienated from a traditional rural existence and as they do so, misfortune and personal tragedy pursue them. Achebe's solution to the problem is not simplistic advocacy of a return to the village, for he knows that would be unrealistic. What he perceives modern, urban Africans require is a firm foundation—a knowledge of their past combined with an understanding of the present—in order to establish a new set of values appropriate to their changed existence. Achebe's novels illustrate the changes which have occurred in Nigeria since the late nineteenth century. Through Okonkwo, the hero of *Things Fall Apart*, we see the strength and vitality of a traditional village community prior to the coming of white missionaries and administrators. The close-knit Ibo village depends for survival on the unity of the group and the bond between the individual and the community. Okonkwo represents the values of his village; he is titled, strong, heroic in battle, and hard-working. He adheres strictly to the spiritual and ethical standards of his clan in the belief that his welfare is inextricably linked to that of the group.

Christianity and the changes to traditional religion, the judicial system, and personal values which accompany it undermine collective solidarity. With its emphasis on individual rather than group responsibility, Christianity encouraged conflict between the



individual and the community. The attack on prevailing beliefs, law, and kinship ties undermines the unity of the village, and “things” actually do fall apart.

Achebe’s three subsequent novels reveal his concern with the effects of the breakdown of traditional values. Two of these, set in urban Lagos, *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People*, portray the radical changes Achebe perceives in recent Ibo society. The new, school-educated Africans have to redefine their values and thus their identity in order to survive. The security offered by traditional village life is no longer available and the individual faces the dilemma of being corrupted by the power acquired as one of the new elite in an independent nation. The old guidelines have vanished and in their place modern Africans must formulate a new set of values or be torn between two conflicting and irreconcilable lifestyles.

The novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o provide an interesting source for students of African literature and history. His first three novels, *The River Between*, *Weep Not, Child* and *A Grain of Wheat* trace developments in Kenya through the early stages of colonization to the struggle for national liberation and the anticipation of Independence. Ngugi is a committed Marxist and his primary themes are linked to the issues of land ownership, alienation from the land, and the economic forces associated with the struggle for Independence.

Just as Achebe relies on Ibo proverbs to lend authenticity and color to his work, Ngugi draws heavily on Kenyan mythology with frequent references to a black prophet now labelled a “Moses” and “the prophesy.” He thus attaches a mystic significance to the struggle of Kenyans to achieve liberation. Ngugi’s first novel, *The River Between*, concerns the influence of Christianity on a ridge tribe, and Ngugi, appropriately enough, introduces the savior symbol. Interwoven through the story are vital elements of Kenya mythology, vital particularly to Ngugi’s commitment to the land issue. At the basis of this mythology is the belief that the creator Murungu had given the land to Gikuyu and Mumbi to pass on to their ancestors for eternity. In addition, it is prophesied that men dressed in clothes like butterflies (p. 2), carrying sticks that produced lethal fire, will later bring a huge iron snake, and most important, will want the ancestral lands for themselves. The only salvation, according to the prophesy, will come from the hills to lead and free the people.

The theme of salvation recurs in Ngugi’s fiction. Possible saviors such as Kenyatta are arrested or hanged by white men, rejected by their own people, or proven incapable of the task. From such a background Mau Mau emerges, claiming to understand the secrets and powers of the white man, and offering salvation to the people by ousting the European and restoring the land to its rightful owners; by

doing so, those having sworn allegiance to Mau Mau principles would fulfill the prophecy.

Ngugi envisages Kenyan society as being restructured through a reactionary revolution to revive social and cultural structures of the past as a reality of the future. Thus his envisaged revolution would not achieve anything new, but restore an "ideal" pre-colonial state which he assumes to have been characterized by peace, harmony, and goodness. Chinua Achebe's answer to the future does not lie in such a simplistic view. For him, one must confront the future; values constantly change and the individual must adapt to survive. It is Achebe's belief that by understanding one's past, selecting the appropriate values and adapting them to the present, the individual can survive.

To allow two writers to speak for many African nations is, of course, a gross over-simplification. These two, Achebe and Ngugi, were chosen from a much wider sample primarily because they show a diversity of views, their works are widely available, and they have both been the subject of considerable literary scholarship. Furthermore, their works reflect the enormous changes which have occurred during this century and focus on the individual African's response to the dilemma.

While the colonial experience was no more pleasant in the Pacific Islands than it was in Africa, there was little organized resistance or violence. In the Pacific region, islanders withdrew, intimidated by their technologically superior colonial masters. This passivity has become a central feature of the Island character, at least as depicted by romance novelists and certainly as promoted by the tourist industry. The lazy, placid, sun and kava-soaked islander, content to sit under a palm tree or in a fishing boat for little or no reward, is a stereotype that indigenous writers are understandably anxious to erase. The islanders they portray are troubled and lonely characters, alienated from their culture, now destroyed by colonialism, and uncomfortable with the new technological world. Like the newly-independent African counterpart some fifteen to twenty years previously, islanders have to redefine their values, lifestyle, and identity. It is no wonder then that the literature coming from Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Fiji reflects many of the themes already evident in African literature.

Papuan New Guinean John Kasaipwalova's poem, "Reluctant Flame,"<sup>3</sup> stands as a direct link between Africa and the Pacific, for in it Kasaipwalova sees their destinies intertwined. His vision is reminiscent of that of the Negritude poets of the 1930s, anxious to establish their differentness, their separateness from whites, and

their cultural purity. The following quotation from Kasaipwalova's long poem illustrates the resentment he nurtures:

Listen carefully, this is but one arm of the  
reluctant flame  
Burning and melting the icy bloodless body  
My flame take your fuel from these brother  
flames  
Let not the oceans drown your linking pipe  
You will grow, you will grow, you will grow  
Like a boil on pale skins  
Maybe your vibrant lava will flow to burn  
anew the world  
When Johannesburg and New York is in flames  
and the black vomit will fertilize this barren  
soil  
But today your eyes are dimdimed and in your  
enemy you see your friend  
My lover, my me, we will not follow the cold  
pale reach for the moon  
Our ancestors and our spirits sleep on this  
earth  
Let the lunatics meet on the lunacy, we will  
use the soil to grow our brotherly flame  
Our reluctant dream flame is burning disconnected  
like a bush fire  
But one day, one day . . . one day . . .<sup>4</sup>

"Reluctant Flame" stands apart from much Pacific literature, unusual in its bitterness, its complexity of language and structure. More typical of the style as well as the sentiments expressed in Pacific poetry during the mid-seventies are these samples from Tongan poet, Kanai Helu Thaman. The first of these poems, "I Tremble,"<sup>5</sup> reveals the poet's insecurity and bewilderment in her changed world.

I tremble  
At the thought  
Of going to town  
And meeting brutal men  
Who think that white is clean  
And black is dirty;  
Of politicians who lie  
And make lots of half promises  
And of ordinary people  
Who believe them  
Just because they wear ties.<sup>6</sup>

The following extract from Thaman's "Elite"<sup>7</sup> illustrates the dilemma of the newly-educated islander, now a member of the elite:

In the dead of night  
he remembers  
His promises, his philosophies  
The fun time he had  
With the common people  
His type of people;  
He was one of them then:  
They drank and wrote together;  
Now he is a different person  
He has a new face  
More serious, more commanding  
And pregnant with pomp.

But he is no better  
Than the old man  
With the torn shirt  
Spitting his way home  
From his garden  
And swallowing the gas-smell  
Dust on his way;  
Or the fellers  
Pushing sand-carts  
Across the torn-up village road.  
He hears his lost friends cry  
"Come down to us, we need you"  
He aches in the desire to  
Identify with them again;  
But it's too late  
He cannot be himself again  
And feels the ground  
Which weeps for his dismemberment.

The most sustained expression of the bewilderment with which islanders see their altered status is in Albert Wendt's novel, *Sons For the Return Home*. Set in both New Zealand and Samoa, *Sons For the Return Home* explores the growing consciousness of the young male character who is torn between loyalty to his Samoan parents and heritage and his love for a white New Zealand woman. As befits the complexity of the situation, Wendt guides us with subtle descriptive prose through the awakening of his character's sexuality and sense of identity. Wendt's character epitomizes the dilemma of the educated islander who is unable and unwilling to fully return home. He finds Samoan society radically different from that portrayed in his mother's stories, and he sees his relative impressed only by material

possessions rather than by strength of character. To escape this shallow materialism, he temporarily immerses himself in Samoan legends and stories about his grandfather. Fortified by this experience, he feels better able to cope with the task of creating a new life by fusing elements of both his traditional and modern existence.

One other published Pacific novel is *The Crocodile* by Papuan New Guinean Vincent Eri. The tone of this novel is far more pessimistic than that of *Sons . . .* and its style far less technically sophisticated. *The Crocodile's* theme, however, is similar, for it too deals with the bewilderment and final despair of a boy who is cheated, exploited, and humiliated by Australian soldiers and colonial administrators. Hoiri, the leading character of the novel, is unable to deal with the growing complexity of his life. His wife is reputedly taken by a crocodile, but it remains unclear whether the crocodile is real or a symbolic representation of sorcerers. Hoiri is torn between seeking revenge through counter-sorcery, in which he has decreasing faith because of his exposure to Christianity, or accepting her death as reality. Hoiri's experiences as an aide to Australian soldiers during World War II, culminating in his attack upon a woman who resembles his dead wife, reveal that he is lost between two cultures. He is rejected as unequal by the white men who have exploited him, but he is also unable to derive satisfaction from his old village ways. Contact with white society has made him ambitious but it has also withheld the means of fulfilling his dreams. His final hope, as he is led to jail, is that someday, through education, his son will come to understand those things which continue to baffle him.

While it has been necessary to focus on the most obvious thematic similarities between African and Pacific literature, other factors, such as the choice of English or French as the means of communication, as well as fundamental stylistic similarities could also be explored. In addition, the writers of the Pacific and Africa face a somewhat uncertain literary future, for unless their more talented writers explore fresh themes, much of the enthusiasm generated by their early work may wane. The literature which has emerged to date, however, is exciting and vital, reflecting the chaotic and bewildering changes accompanying the end of colonialism.

The major concerns of many African and Pacific writers are issues which determine their viability as members of an ethnic community. The question of identification with the land, both in the particular sense of an individual's right to property and in the general sense of a "homeland," lies at the heart of a number of African and Pacific novels and poems. Ngugi, for example, deals with the question of land rights extensively in *A Grain of Wheat*. Albert Wendt deals with the question of each from one's homeland in *Sons For The Return Home*. While

the exile from Samoa has been voluntary, it has been an unhappy experience. The Samoa they left flowers in the parents' imaginations, and the sons hear tales of a land and people which assume heroic proportions. The reality of the Samoa they finally return to is not the "home" the hero anticipates, and at the end of the novel he leaves to continue the search. Although he is more confident in his knowledge of himself as an individual, in fact he is still in exile, unsure of his ethnicity.

In Achebe's work, the "homeland" symbol is the rural village where traditional values, though weakened, are still retained. Modern Africans, suggests Achebe, should not abandon their past, for a sense of history, of shared customs and experiences is necessary to help them establish themselves in a changed world. In his early novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, Achebe thus emphasizes the songs, proverbs and legends which were an important part of traditional Ibo life, thereby teaching his people about their past so that they may recapture a sense of continuity.

African and Pacific writing is a reaction in part to a threat upon a peoples' existence. The threats posed by sweeping technological changes are perceived to be as real as those posed by colonialism. Even though colonialism is a thing of the past for most Africans and many islanders, their lives have been so altered that it is difficult for them to think of themselves as part of a continuous heritage. While the writers from these regions reflect upon the bewildering experiences they and their people share, they are involved in the task of unifying their people. The writer's task, then, is at once personal and political, for the literature provides a focus, a means by which people can identify themselves as members of a group whose bonds transcend the maelstrom generated by the collision of traditional and technological forces.

\* \* \* \*

While African and Pacific writing can be seen to be a reaction to a threatened existence, many white readers have in turn rejected the writing because they perceive it to be threatening their own existence. My experiences in developing a course entitled "African and Pacific Island Literature" taught in an Australian senior secondary school illustrate some of the practical difficulties and frustrations involved in teaching ethnic literature.

I was attracted to African and Pacific writing for its freshness of themes and language, and I believed that it could provide exciting material for the classroom. Literature students, I was certain, would be interested in the blending of myths with contemporary prose as well as in the close relationship between the writing and current events. At the time I was preparing the course, Papua New Guinea author Vincent Eri was the High Commissioner to Australia, and he

was prepared to come to discuss his novel with my classes. The combination of these factors augered well for the course.

The first difficulty I encountered was having the course accredited by the Committee constituted of university professors and education administrators. Their initial reaction, without having read the texts in question, was that ethnic literature was suitable for teaching in only the anthropology, sociology, or history department. Even though the people who constituted the Committee did approve the course, their attitudes were disturbing.

My second obstacle was even more frustrating. Acquiring the required texts was the major practical difficulty. Not only did local bookstores not carry the books, but publishers did not hold sufficiently large stocks nor show any desire for keeping the required books in print. It was not until the second year of teaching the course that an adequate number of books was available for classroom use.

Most of the students shared my enthusiasm for the material and the course had full enrollment each term it was offered. The comments made by colleagues about the course, however, were sometimes less than enthusiastic. The reluctance of Australian teachers to teach contemporary Aboriginal literature, as opposed to myths and legends, have complex origins. The material written by ethnic writers is frequently perceived as threatening, violent, and bitter, and of course some of it is. Ethnic writers question attitudes, lifestyles, and values long accepted as the only way. Since much of ethnic material is seen as too disturbing for classroom use, other labels are found to describe it — becoming “second-rate” literature, suitable only for study in the social sciences, and difficult to find on the shelves of libraries and bookstores.

The difficulties I encountered were shared by colleagues trying to get other ethnic courses such as Afroamerican and Asian literature accepted in the curriculum. With an increasing emphasis on a conservative curriculum in Schools and colleges and on “safe” career options in the eighties, it will take determined effort on the part of teachers and students of ethnic studies to keep interest alive in the work of indigenous writers everywhere.

## NOTES

\*This paper was presented at the Second Annual Midwest Regional Conference of NAIIES, Ames, Iowa, October 29, 1981, and at The Tenth Annual Conference on Ethnic and Minority Studies at The University of Santa Clara, Santa Clara, California, April 14-17, 1982.

<sup>1</sup>G. Killam, ed., *African Writers on African Writing*. (London: Heinemann, 1973) 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. *The River Between*. (London: Heinemann, 1965).

<sup>3</sup>Ulli Beier, ed., *Black Writing From New Guinea*. (St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1973) 55-62.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>5</sup>Konai Helu Thaman. *You, The Choice of My Parents*. (Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1974).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>8</sup>Albert Wendt. *Sons For the Return Home*. (Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia: Longman Paul, Ltd., 1975).

### **African Literature**

Achebe, Chinua. *A Man of the People*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

Achebe, Chinua. *No Longer at Ease*. New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1961.

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

Thiong'o Ngugi Wa. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1967.

Thiong'o Ngugi Wa. *The River Between*. London: Heinemann, 1965.

Thiong'o Ngugi Wa. *Weep Not, Child*. London: Heinemann, 1964.

### **Pacific Island Literature**

Beier, Ulli, ed. *Black Writing From New Guinea*. Brisbane, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1973.

Eri, Vincent. *The Crocodile*. Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973.

Thaman, Konai Helu. *You, The Choice of My Parents*. Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1974.

Wendt, Albert. *Sons For the Return Home*. Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia: Longman, Australia, Pty. Ltd., 1975.

### **Supplemental Reading List of Pacific Island Literature**

Krauth, Nigel and Elton Brash, eds. *Modern Poetry from New Guinea*. Port Moresby, PNG: Papua Pocket Poets, 1972.

Malifo, Sano. *Looking Down the Waves*. Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1975.



- Wendt, Albert, ed. *Some Modern Poetry from Fiji*. Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1974.
- Wendt, Albert, ed. *Some Modern Poetry from Western Samoa*. Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1974.
- Wendt, Albert, ed. *Some Modern Poetry from the Solomon Islands*. Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1975.
- Wendt, Albert, ed. *Leaves of the Banyon Tree*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1981.
- Wendt, Albert, ed. *Some Modern Poetry From the New Hebrides*. Suva, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1975.
- Wendt, Albert. *Flying—Fox in a Freedom Tree*. Hawthorn, Vic. Australia: Longman Australia Pty. Ltd., 1974 (Short Stories).

### Critique

Kristine Martin's study makes available the relatively little-known literature of the southern Pacific basin islands. Her article has merit because it is compared with the more widely-read African literature, and she makes a significant contribution with the comparisons. Both the Pacific selections, a recent phenomena, and the older African works are transitional literatures — striving to connect the colonized past with a post-colonial synthesis which is relevant to the author of the intended audience. As Martin shows, the audience is composed of compatriots.

Martin presents the fact that “little organized resistance or violence” was produced in the Pacific islands on the way to liberation from colonizers, an experience unique among the recently decolonized. Her excellent analysis of the similarities between African and island post-colonial literature shows that exploring this difference could be a fruitful endeavor.

Literature with an identity based on oppression is bound to be either imitative of the colonizer, reactionary, or a conscious personal, social, and political educative body of work. Martin provides us with examples of the last kind from both regions.

Martin's comparative study points out the dangers of reliance on foreign writers for an interpretation of a people and their land — or, as Mannoni phrases it, the Other. Other writers, storytellers, novelists, and travel narrators can be read in good conscience; however, one must be conscious and selective. Even if the original impetus of the writer is a

self-seeking journey, all is not lost. A case can be made to show that even the best writers are only seeking themselves; but in doing so, they illuminate both the inner and outer human landscapes no matter what or where the territory lies. Literature must be planted firmly in some soil. Even works of non-realism such as those of Jorge Luis Borges make use of spiritual landscapes which have at least been partly inherited by the writer.

Just as some African and Pacific island literature is translated into English or French, so good non-local writers translate a foreign cultural landscape. Any translation is necessarily imperfect, but the link provided makes comprehension more probable.

Margaret Laurence was in Somalia and Nigeria for seven years. Her ability to write great fiction about East and West Africa, Canada, and the British Isles is due in part to her imaginative comprehension of the Other — an ability nurtured by her experiences on the African continent.

When like can only speak for like, distortion follows. Emissaries between peoples can help give us an appreciation of human differences and shared universals. Martin has done for us what Michener and Melville were unable to do for her.

R. Dennis Stewart  
Davis, California

### Critique

Kristine Martin demonstrates the need for the serious scholar to address the topic of African and Pacific literature in the form of comparative analysis. She has provided a good example for others to emulate, for her study is concerned with self-identity in the formation of ethnicity.

Other readers who are unfamiliar with African and Pacific island transitional literature may question the relevance and importance of Martin's article on first reading. However, the author makes two key points which appropriately address any concerns about relevance for widening our frame of reference. First, she notes that "the major concerns of many African and Pacific writers are issues which determine their viability as members of an ethnic community." And her second major point is that African and Pacific literature provides "a focus, a means by which people can identify themselves as members of a group whose bonds transcend the maelstrom generated by the collision of transitional and technological forces."

Beyond the analysis of literature in the formation of ethnic identity, however, is Martin's carefully crafted biographical information concerning the development of her course at the high school level in Australia. It is a lesson from which we can all learn in developing ethnic content in our own classes and courses. Indeed, Martin shows what obstacles stand before us while demonstrating that the roadblocks are surmountable.

Scholarly endeavors such as Martin's must be used as tools for analyzing and bringing forth the vital reservoir of spiritual and intellectual power of racial minorities throughout the recently colonized world, for the significance of self-esteem in the formation of a positive ethnic identity is paramount. Anything less than the full development of ethnic artists in academic circles can only serve as a dilution and camouflage for that which we call ethnic studies.

James H. Williams  
California State Polytechnic University

**Literature of Oppression:  
A Critique of "African and Pacific Literature"  
Mary Sisney**

Kristine Martin states that "the literature which has developed over the past thirty years in Africa and over the past ten in the Pacific mirrors their shared experiences and outlook." Black Americans have also lived in a society controlled by whites. They have also been portrayed as uncivilized, culturally deprived, less-than-second-class citizens. And black Americans have also felt "bitterness, frustration, and longing." It is not surprising, therefore, that black American literature has many of the characteristics Martin found in African and South Pacific literature.

Like the writers of the newly independent African and Pacific nations, such post-Civil War black writers as Charles Chesnutt, Paul Dunbar, and James Weldon Johnson were intent upon redefining black identity. Their major characters were doctors, teachers, and talented musicians. This emphasis upon the black middle class — "the talented tenth" — was an attempt to demonstrate that former slaves could succeed in a white world. Perhaps more important, it was also an attempt to erase, or at least to neutralize, the Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page images of shiftless black buffoons, dominant in late nineteenth century American literature.<sup>1</sup>

After World War I and the “Great Migration,” black American writers saw some of the same changes in values that Chinua Achebe describes in *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People*. Blacks moved from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrial one. The changes that occurred as a result of this migration are described in such works as Rudolph Fisher’s “Miss Cynthia,” a story about a Southern black woman who goes to Harlem and discovers that her grandson has left the church for the theater. Miss Cynthia’s grandson drives a fancy car and wears expensive suits, but many of the blacks who went North found the same poverty and oppression that they had left “down home.”

The “literature of oppression” is a term coined by William Burke to describe black fiction. The term is also applicable to the works discussed by Martin. As Burke explains:

It may be, in fact, that the most serious aspect of our racial crisis is the denial of cultural identity to black people . . . Indeed, the comments from the creators and conservers of black culture—her artists and critics—indicate that a primary concern for them is the establishment of a visible culture, including the representation of the experience of black people in this country and its meaning to them in fictional and factual terms.<sup>2</sup>

These concerns are similar to those of the African and Pacific writers who, in reaction to “a threat upon a people’s existence,” have attempted to “provide a focus, a means by which people can identify themselves as members of a group.” These are the inevitable concerns of any “literature of oppression,” wherever it is written.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Robert Bone’s *Down Home* (New York: Putnam, 1975, 13-18) for a discussion of “the plantation school” of writers. Interestingly, Herman Melville’s portrayal of black slaves in *Benito Cereno* is similar to his treatment of the Marquesans in *Typee*.

<sup>2</sup>William Burke. *Modern Black Fiction and the Literature of Oppression*. Ph.D. Dissertation. (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1971) 3.

## ON THE STREET BE SINGIN'

pork pie hat  
towers above the endless mass  
the brother's rancorous music box  
    and short defiant strides  
turning heads  
a woman's greyhaired  
dark glass composition  
and a restless executive's  
mordant sigh  
a japanese woman's tattered dress  
the remnants of yellow peril indigenous  
    sistersoul kicks back radiant like oil  
    that sheik caught her eye  
    he strutting down main street  
cool  
    but on this granite sidewalk  
mama's barefoot chile put 'em in the fountain  
for relief.

—Jeff Langford

## MY UNCLE PLAYED THE SAX

Brown face glistening,  
Eyes dancing,  
He be-bopped through my childhood,  
Carrying Dizzy, and 'Trane,  
And Bird, and Dexter,  
And all my heroes,  
In that same beat-up, black case,  
Where he carried his saxophone.

—Louis E. Bryan

## MRS. CAMERON'S BABY

Every day she'd pass by,  
Pushing an old baby carriage,  
"Mornin' Mrs. Cameron!"  
I'd yell from across the street,  
"Mornin' young man," she'd answer politely.  
What more could a small boy say,  
To a poor old woman,  
Pushing the memory of her long dead child?

—Louis E. Bryan

# Some Symbols of Identity of Byzantine Catholics<sup>1</sup>

## Robert J. Skovira

### Introduction

This essay is a description of some of an ethnic group's symbols of identity<sup>2</sup>; its aim is to explore the meanings of the following statement:

[Byzantine Catholics] are no longer an immigrant and ethnic group. Byzantine Catholics are American in every sense of the word, that the rite itself is American as opposed to foreign, and that both the rite and its adherents have become part and parcel of the American scene.<sup>3</sup>

This straight-forward statement claims that there has been a reinterpretation and reexpression of identity within a new political and sociocultural environment.<sup>4</sup> It is commonsense, for example, to think that individuals as a group do, re-do, rearrange, and change the expressions of values and beliefs in new situations. But, in order to ensure continuity in the midst of change, people will usually use already existing symbols—or whatever is at hand and familiar. Byzantine Catholic identity is a case of new bottles with old wine.

Ethnic groups and their members rely upon any number of factors to symbolize the values and beliefs with which they identify and by which they are identified. Such symbols of identity are manipulated, exploited, reinterpreted, or changed, over time, according to the requirements of the context. In any event, people always use whatever is present to them for maintaining some continuity of identity while, at the same time, adjusting to new states-of-affairs. Herskovits shows, for example, that

We are dealing with a basic process in the adjustment of individual behavior and of institutional structures to be found in all situations where people having different ways of life come into contact. This process we term *reinterpretation*, whereby sanctions and values of a given tradition under contact with another are applied to new forms, combining and recombining until syncretisms develop that rework them into meaningful, well functioning conventions.<sup>5</sup>

Such reconstructions are represented by the items taken to be or designated to be symbols of an ethnic identity or ethnicity.

Symbols express the world view of an ethnic group. The symbols are generated and maintained in the forms of group life and by the leaders of the group, functioning as frames of reference and definitions of context. Symbols are signs of awareness, moving members of the group to act; thus, structuring and ordering the behavior of the group's

members toward commonly-held ends and shared reasons for being:

The symbol becomes associated with human interests, purposes, ends, and means, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred from the observed behavior.<sup>6</sup>

A symbol, then, is a channel of social, political, and psychological allegiance to the values and beliefs of the group. A configuration or set of symbols becomes the basis for ethnicity, i.e., an ethnic identity.<sup>7</sup>

Ethnicity is taken to be a self-ascribed identity which maintains social networks and boundaries. A self-ascribed identity consists of the origin and background of individuals, the environment into which they are born, and the conscious and unconscious value and belief system which they use to differentiate themselves from other groups; the factors of identity are usually expressed in judgments about themselves and others. The following examples are used among Byzantine Catholics: "I am Slovak" or "We're Hunkies." Judgments about styles of behavior and what a "good" Slovak is like are also important. It is the self-ascribed identity, represented by various symbols, which determines the network of social relations and how individuals interact with others.<sup>8</sup>

Among the symbols of self-identity, the name of a group can symbolize political, social, cultural and religious points of view, i.e., a name channels patterns of behavior. Thus, the name Byzantine Catholic represents the social boundaries and the identity of an ethnic population. Consequently, one of the important symbols of group membership is the knowledge and use of the "correct" name or names, for there are public and private names. With Byzantine Catholics, for example, the "correct" name formerly was Greek Catholic. Only within the last twenty years has the name been replaced with Byzantine Catholic. Change is still occurring. On a souvenir ribbon of a mortgage burning in 1981, the inscription read: "St. George Catholic Church, Byzantine Rite." The emphasis of identification has shifted to Catholic rather than Byzantine.

Historically, Byzantine Catholics have always struggled with a choice of religious and national identities, and the appropriate symbols.<sup>9</sup> There is difficulty separating nationalism (however unformed or incipient it may be) and the religious function of the church.<sup>10</sup> In Eastern European countries, a religious identity or allegiance often signaled a national identity or patriotism.<sup>11</sup>

Byzantine Catholics are members of the Eastern/Oriental Catholic rites. The rites are Alexandrian, the Antiochene, the Chaldean, and the Byzantine. The Byzantine rite is divided into the following churches: Bulgarian, Greek, Melchite, Romanian, Russian,

Ukrainian, Ruthenian,<sup>12</sup> and Slovak<sup>13</sup> as the most recent addition. The Byzantine Catholics in this essay are of the Ruthenian church.

The Ruthenians<sup>14</sup> have been called Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics since the Union or Uzhhorod, April 24, 1646.<sup>15</sup> An exarchate for Greek Catholics was established in the U.S. in 1913 with Bishop Ortijnskyj as its head. The ecclesiastical structure combined Galicians (Ukrainians) with Ruthenians, Croatians, Hungarians, and Slovaks. In 1924, the Ruthenians *et aliter* and Galicians were divided into two exarchates: Pittsburgh (or Munhall) for Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics, and Philadelphia for the Galicians or Ukrainian Byzantine Catholics.

In 1963, the eparchies of Munhall and Passaic, New Jersey, were created for Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics. In 1969, the Metropolitan Ruthenian Province of Munhall was formed: Munhall became an archeparchy: Passaic and Parma remained as eparchies under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Munhall.<sup>16</sup> In December of 1981, a third eparchy under the Metropolitan of Munhall was established at Van Nuys, California.<sup>17</sup>

Ecclesiastical authority, much like secular governments, has ignored the actual diversity of its population by designating them all Ruthenians. Byzantine Catholics have been known or counted variously as Russians, Slovaks, Hungarians, Austro-Hungarians, Austrian, Subcarpathian Rus, Uhro-Rusins, Carpatho-Russians, Carpatho-Ukrainians or Carpatho-Rusins (or Rusyns). More popular names among members of the group are Slavish, Hunky, and Rusnaks.<sup>18</sup> What one is called, or what name a person uses in self-reference, is of major concern as was demonstrated by a series of articles in the *GCU Messenger*<sup>19</sup> arguing for a specific spelling of Rusin and not Rusyn.<sup>20</sup>

Although there is a confusing array of “nationality” names, Byzantine Catholics represent their identity by a configuration of symbols other than names. Being Byzantine Catholic is a commonly-held identity which is based upon a specific system of religious traditions. The customs and traditions of religious orientation have managed to withstand the forces of assimilation in the United States better than the cultural traditions associated with being Ruthenian or Rusin.<sup>21</sup>

Symbols of ethnic identity for Byzantine Catholics appear in many forms, and specific activities and events of communal participation can be symbols which establish group boundaries.<sup>22</sup> There are customary activities conducted in the course of the year for members of the group. To outsiders, the symbols are public signs of differences in worldviews.



## Symbolic Expressions of Identity

There are “private” ceremonies and “public” events which symbolize the customs of Byzantine Catholics. The private occasions are part of parish or communal life; the public events are Byzantine Catholic Day or Russkij Den and The Our Lady of Perpetual Help Pilgrimage. These traditional and customary events provide the forms by which thoughts, feelings, and behavior are structured.

### Communal Ceremonies

One example concerning the symbolic nature of Byzantine Catholic identity is St. Nicholas Day, December 6. The people celebrate this day as a major event; they have a communal meal in the church hall; there is a visit by St. Nicholas of Myra in his *ecclesiastical* robes, bringing some small gift for all the children present. There is usually some form of entertainment and some speech-making. Older informants have related that St. Nicholas Day was the day for gift-giving in the Old Country and even in the early days in the New Country. Should St. Nicholas Day fall on a Sunday, the following song is sung as part of Divine Liturgy.

Okto, kto Nikolaja lúbit,  
Okto, kto Nikolaja sluzit.  
:Tomu svjatuj Nikolaj  
Na vsjaky čas pomahaj  
Nikolaj, Nikolaj.

O who loves Nicholas the saintly  
O who serves Nicholas the saintly  
:Him will Nicholas receive  
And give help in time of need,  
Holy Father Nicholas.<sup>23</sup>

The traditional song to St. Nicholas is always sung by the whole group.

Another communal event which helps to focus the identity of the group's members and maintains social networks is the celebration of St. Thomas' Sunday with a parish meal—always the Sunday after Easter. Members of the group arrive at the church hall with dishes of Easter food.<sup>24</sup> People greet one another with the traditional seasonal salutation: “Christos Voskrese” to which is answered “Vostinnu Voskrese” (“Christ is Risen; indeed, He is Risen”). A special Easter paska, called the Artos, is baked by a member of the parish. It is much larger than the normal paska, measuring about fourteen to sixteen inches in diameter and about six to eight inches thick. It must be large enough so that everyone present at St. Thomas' Day dinner will receive a portion of it. There is some singing of traditional Easter

hymns and a talk by the priest or a visitor on the meaning of the meal; the meal usually lasts two to three hours.

Another tradition symbolic of Byzantine Catholic identity is the placing of green-leaved branches on the altar of the church, and decorating the home with them on Green Sunday. Green Sunday for Byzantine Catholics is Pentecost Sunday, which in the Roman rite is signified by the color red. One informant stated that even in America on the eve of Green Sunday the men of the patches would go out into the surrounding countryside to cut green branches, and carry them through the streets to their homes.<sup>25</sup>

The preceding events are examples of communal functions, serving as symbols of identity. The events are, to a degree, private occasions. The remainder of this essay is concerned with two events which are public symbols of identity: Byzantine Catholic Day and The Theotokos Pilgrimage.

### **Byzantine Catholic Day (Russkij Den)**

Russkij Den was held for the 59th time in 1979; it lasts for one day and only has regional participation. This festive day is held at Kennywood Park, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania; it is a public event, for the activities are conducted while the park is open for business-as-usual. Kennywood Park advertised the event in 1979 as Byzantine Catholic Day; when the park was called to enquire about the affair, the name "Russkij Den" was not immediately recognized. The advertisement for the 1981 event announced: "Byzantine Catholic Churches Day of the Greater Pittsburgh Area."<sup>26</sup>

While Byzantine Catholic Day is a symbol of identity, it is also an occasion for the use of other, more particular, symbols. An example is the program booklet for 1979; the color of the cover is red, white, and blue—symbolizing the patriotic feelings the group holds for the USA;<sup>27</sup> there is an American flag pictured with the heraldic national emblem of Ruthenia;<sup>28</sup> a pair of clasped hands represents the idea and feelings of fraternalism; and the cover's wording reads, *The Fifty-ninth Annual Russkij Den, Byzantine Catholic Day*. In comparison, the cover of the 1980 booklet reads: *The Sixtieth Annual Russkij Den, Byzantine Catholic Churches Day of the Greater Pittsburgh Area*. Its cover is adorned with a drawing of a church topped with three onion-shaped domes with the traditional Byzantine Cross on them, a picture of the flag of the United States, and emblems representing the two fraternal societies which serve the people: The Greek Catholic Union and United Societies of the U.S.A.

Byzantine Catholic Day begins with athletic contests between teams from area Byzantine Catholic Churches. The activities begin

with an affirmation of a dual identity: American and Rusyn or Ruthenian. The participants and spectators sing the “Star Spangled Banner,” and then “Ja Rusyn Byl,” the Ruthenian national anthem.<sup>29</sup> The Ruthenian national anthem focuses the commonality of the group. Later, during the evening program, a similar pattern develops. The “Star Spangled Banner” and “America the Beautiful” are sung, and the “Pledge of Allegiance” is recited. Members of Rusyny—a Carpatho-Rusyn folk dance group—lead the recitations. Afterwards, the national anthem of Ruthenia is sung:

Ja Rusyn byl, jesm i budu,  
Ja rodilsja Rusynom.  
Cestny moj rod, ze zabudu  
Ostanus jeho synom.

I was, am and will be Rusyn  
I was born a Rusyn,  
I shall never forget my honorable heritage  
I shall remain its son.<sup>30</sup>

After remarks by officers of the fraternals, athletic trophies are given to competing Byzantine Churches by the Metropolitan Archbishop of Munhall.

While emblems and signs of a foreign nation or religious identity are displayed, their symbolic force is manipulated largely by religious leaders—not a new phenomenon for this group. The clergy, for the most part, were the first to articulate a Ruthenian identity in the Old Country if they were not magyarized or Russophiles. The clerics, because of their educational opportunities (once seminaries were organized), naturally became the intellectuals and leaders of the mostly peasant group. The few lay people who were educated usually migrated to other countries to teach and write. It was only in the late 19th century in Eastern Europe and upon arrival in the United States that lay people became active competitors for the group’s leadership. In many ways, the competition continues.

During the evening program, there is another public affirmation of American identity in conjunction with the importance of being Byzantine Catholic. Father Rosack, the main speaker for the evening program in 1979, focused the audience’s attention upon being Byzantine Catholic in America and emphasized that this rite is no longer a foreign ritual.

Though we as a nation of Catholics of the Byzantine Rite were not here when this nation was founded, we call ourselves Americans, nevertheless, and justly for two reasons. First, this is the land of promise to which our ancestors came and this is the nation which they came to call their own through citizenship. As

soon as they were eligible, our ancestors pledged their allegiance to these United States and were adopted as its own by this country. Secondly, we of succeeding generations call ourselves American by virtue of our birthright and we have demonstrated our allegiance by the services which we have given our country in peace as well as in war with distinction.<sup>31</sup>

Within this frame of reference, Rysny entertained the crowd with a selection of traditional Ruthenian songs and dances.

The program leaflet of the Rusyny gives more force to the symbolization of Byzantine Catholic identity. There is a drawing of an "oriental" dome topped by the traditional Byzantine Cross with the words: "Slava Isusu Christu" (Glory to Jesus Christ); it also mentions the "Ruska Vira" (Rusyn faith) demonstrative of the Rusyns' traditionally strong belief in God and allegiance to the Byzantine Church. Use is made of the term "po nasomu" (for our own kind) which refers to the Rusyn Ruthenian-Byzantine identity.<sup>32</sup>

The final symbolic expression of identity during the evening program of the 1979 Byzantine Catholic Day was the singing of a traditional Marian hymn in Old Slavonic, which is the traditional language of Byzantine Catholic liturgy. The hymn is as follows:

Dostojno jest' jako voistinnu plaziti t'a  
bohorodicu, prisenoblazennuju i preneporočnuju  
i Mater' Boho našeho. Čestnijšuju Cheruvim  
i slavnijšuju bez sravnenija Serafim, bez  
istlinija Boho Slova roždšuju, suščuju  
Bohorodicu, t'a veličajem.

It is truly to glorify you, who have borne  
God, the ever blessed Immaculate, and the  
Mother of our God, More honorable than the  
Cherabim, and beyond compare more glorious than the  
Seraphim, who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly  
the Mother of God, we magnify.

Just as the day began with symbols of an American identity, it ended with a symbol of Byzantine Catholic identity (and, implicitly, Ruthenian/Rusyn).

### **The Theotokos Pilgrimage**

The pilgrimage in honor of the *Theotokos*, Most Holy Mother of God, takes place at Uniontown, Pennsylvania. It customarily begins on the Thursday or Friday before Labor Day and ends on Labor Day. It is an annual celebration. This explicitly religious event draws a large crowd of pilgrims from Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania. The people arrive in private cars and chartered buses. The groups arriving by bus go in a procession led by a cross-bearer and

singing hymns to an altar in front of the main building on the grounds. There, a priest blesses the group. People arriving in cars also go to the same place to be blessed; after the blessings the pilgrimage moves to another stage.

The original locale of the Theotokos Pilgrimage was St. Nicholas Orphanage in Elmhurst, Pennsylvania; the first pilgrimage took place in 1928. After 1935, it was held at Mt. St. Macrina, Uniontown. Unlike many other pilgrimages, no miraculous event initiated the Theotokos Pilgrimage or the choice of Mt. St. Macrina as the pilgrimage site. The first Ruthenian bishop, Takach, began the pilgrimage to engender and maintain a religious consciousness among Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics. Thus, from its inception, the Theotokos Pilgrimage was a deliberate religious *and* social form created to help a population maintain its identity.<sup>33</sup>

The annual Theotokos Pilgrimage at Uniontown is a ceremonial arena which incorporates symbols of Byzantine Catholic identity and Ruthenian identity. The pilgrimage is an important symbol of unity as well as a context for symbolic presentations. In this context, the Byzantine Catholic symbols function in a way to transcend foreign national identities. For example, while Divine Liturgies are celebrated in Hungarian and Rusyn, the dominant languages are English and Old Slavonic.

Although the Theotokos Pilgrimage is a religious and social event, some evidence of Byzantine Catholic foreign national identity was present in 1979.<sup>34</sup> This identification, usually in terms of county, town, or village of the Old Country, occurred as individuals met and talked with one another.<sup>35</sup> This kind of fragmentation occurs at Byzantine Catholic Day. And, in many conversations overheard at the parish level, information about Old Country origin is asked for and readily given if it is not already known. "Being from the same village or county" is an identity marker for individuals born in the United States, even for third and fourth generation people. The kraj (region or country) becomes a symbol of identity.

During the pilgrimage, in a centrally-located building on the grounds, there are tables set up with booklets and other materials. In 1979, a person could have found the official pilgrimage program, a leaflet describing Carpatho-Ruthenian identity and its emblems, a booklet entitled *Our Martyred Bishop Romzah*, and a picture of Pope Paul II with the bishops of the Byzantine Rite. In 1981, besides the program of pilgrimage events, souvenir buttons were available.<sup>36</sup>

That there was a separate leaflet on Carpatho-Ruthenian identity in 1979 becomes significant when the title of the program is compared to the 1974 program. It was the Forty-fifth Annual Pilgrimage to the

Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 1979, while in 1974 it was the Byzantine Ruthenian Province Fortieth Annual Pilgrimage. In 1981, it was the Forty-seventh Annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Any nationalistic reference serves as a pointer toward the more generalized religious identity.<sup>37</sup> A similar example was found in a parish bulletin of February 22, 1981: "Professor \_\_\_\_\_ has graciously accepted to teach our Slavic language. Here is your chance to learn your native tongue."<sup>38</sup> In a way, even the language which normally symbolizes a nationality is a vehicle for a religious identity.

At a booth on the grounds of Mt. St. Macrina in 1979, bumper stickers and decals for cars were being sold. This was also the case in 1981. These read "Slava Isusu Christu" (Glory to Jesus Christ) and "S Nami Boh" (God with us) and were combined with a drawing of the Byzantine Cross.<sup>39</sup>

At the 1979 pilgrimage, and again in 1981, there were booths where copies of the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help were being sold to the Pilgrims; the icons help to focus Byzantine Catholic identity. Some booths sell recordings of folk songs, dance tunes, and religious music. Others give away prayer cards and religious articles; a store sells Byzantine and Roman rite religious articles.<sup>40</sup> Greeting cards in Slovak, Old Slavonic, and English are displayed. Still other booths sell traditional foods and pastries such as honey cakes; such items reinforce the values, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of the pilgrims. The linkages are the symbols of an identity different from the "American identity."

Elsewhere on the grounds, groups of people are sitting, standing, or kneeling in front of various open-air shrines. Banks of votive candles are burning. At one such shrine, people gather to pray, light candles, and fill containers with the water coming from the spring over which the shrine is built. People also gather at set times, either in a chapel in the main building or before an altar covered with an awning and decorated with wreaths of flowers, for the celebration of Divine Liturgy which at one time is in Hungarian, or Rusyn, another time Old Slavonic or in English. And at several places on the grounds, confessional lines stretch back from a simple kneeler with only a fabric screen between the priest and the person confessing.

## **Conclusions**

Self-identification as Byzantine Catholic causes the people to participate in private ceremonies and public events, reinforcing foreign national identity—for being Byzantine Catholic is also Ruthenian, Rusyn, Slovak, Hungarian, and Croatian. The Theotokos Pilgrimage, as a symbol and element of an ethnic group's lifeworld,

renews the spirit—the *Duch* of this group.<sup>41</sup>

Certain traditional affairs and objects function to symbolize a self-ascriptive identity. The group uses foreign nationalistic emblems to signal the dominant identity patterns of Byzantine Catholics. However, symbols of Byzantine Catholic identity also function to form foreign national identity patterns.

As new situations are encountered, as new social forces develop, as positions and educational achievement change, as individual and group statuses are perceived of as changed, symbols of identity are adapted and meanings are transformed; Byzantine Catholic Days are being held in locations other than Kennywood Park as people migrate and relocate throughout the United States. Finally, an informant said: “I was born in this country and I’m an American.” However, this same individual listens to local polka programs on Sundays after Divine Liturgy, a program called, “The Slovak Hour,” and is a member of the Greek Catholic Union.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This article is based upon fieldwork and research on Byzantine Catholic Day (Russkij Den), 1979, the annual Pilgrimage of the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 1979 and 1981, and fieldwork in a Byzantine Catholic parish in Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1977 to 1980. The author wishes to thank Dr. Arthur Tuden, Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh, and Mary Elizabeth Machuga Skovira for their assistance in developing this presentation.

<sup>2</sup>While the term “ethnic groups” is used here and elsewhere in this article, the name “Byzantine Catholic” covers several groups as the section on names demonstrates.

<sup>3</sup>Edward V. Rosack. “Two Springboards.” *Byzantine Catholic World*. XXIII, 52 (December 31, 1978) 4.

<sup>4</sup>Melville J. Herskovits. *Cultural Anthropology*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955) 492.

<sup>5</sup>Melville J. Herskovits. *The Human Factor in Changing Africa*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) 292.

<sup>6</sup>Victor Turner. *The Forest of Symbols*. (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1967) 20.

<sup>7</sup>Fredrik Barth, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969) 14.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>9</sup>Walter C. Warzeski. *Byzantine Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America*. (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1971) v.

<sup>10</sup>Herskovits, 1962, 428.

<sup>11</sup>Paul Robert Magocsi. *The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus 1848-1948*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 21; hereafter cited as *National Identity*. While in the article "Carpatho-Rusyns," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Stephen Themstrom, ed. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980), Magocsi states that the Carpatho-Rusyns (who are usually identified as Byzantine Catholics) never formed their own nation-state, it is commonly held among members of this group that they did, and do form a nation of people. See the dissertation: Peter George Stercho. *Carpatho-Ukraine in International Affairs, 1938-1939*. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1962) 47-49; see especially 49, 52, 62, 73.

<sup>12</sup>Basil Shereghy. *The Byzantine Catholics*. (Pittsburgh, 1981) 7-16. See also: "Rites, Canonical." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. XII (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1967) 516.

<sup>13</sup>J.M. Kirschbaum. "Historical Background on the New Diocese of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Canada." *Jednota*. 9, 4779 (March 18, 1981) 1, 5.

<sup>14</sup>The name "Ruthenian" was first used by Greek and Latin historians when they referred to the people inhabiting parts of Eastern Slovakia (in the shaded area of map below). The name "Ruthenian" while it does have historical and contemporary ecclesiastical use is not the name commonly used by members of the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church. See: Lecture notes of Basil Shereghy, Spring, 1979. Pittsburgh, Pa.



<sup>15</sup>Magocsi. *National Identity*, 21.

<sup>16</sup>A. Pekar. *Our Past and Present: Historical Outline of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Province*. (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1974) 40-44.



<sup>17</sup>The eparchy of Van Nuys covers California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska.

<sup>18</sup>Shereghy. *The Byzantine Catholics*. See also: John Slivka. *The History of the Greek Rite Catholics in Pannonia, Czechoslovakia and Podkarpatska Rus 1863-1949*. (Pittsburgh, 1974). See further, Paul R. Magocsi. "Rusyn American Ethnic Literature." *Ethnic Literature Since 1776: The Many Voices of America, Part II*. Wolodymyr T. Zyla and Wendall M. Aycock, eds. (Lubbock, Texas Tech Press, 1978) 514-515, especially note three; Slavish and Hunky appear to be pan-Slav while Rusnak is specific.

<sup>19</sup>Daniel F. Tanzone. *Fraternalism and the Slovak Immigrant*. (Reprint from the *Jednota Annual Furdek 1978*, prepared and edited by Joseph C. Krajsa. Cleveland: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1978) 8.

<sup>20</sup>The *Greek Catholic Union Messenger* is one of the oldest fraternal newspapers for Rusins (Ruthenians) in the United States.

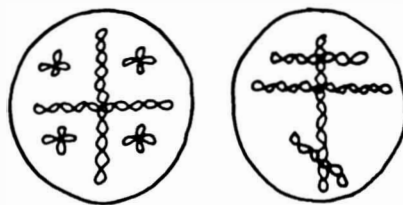
<sup>21</sup>Michael Roman. "The Correct and Historical Spelling of the Name is . . . Rusin!" *Greek Catholic Union Messenger*. LXXXIII, 22 and 23 (October 30 and November 13, 1980).

<sup>22</sup>One religious tradition that did not survive is that of married clergy. The Roman Catholic hierarchy successfully petitioned Rome to stop this practice because it viewed the practice as scandalous, resulting in a ban against married clergy in 1929. See: A. Pekar. "The Carpatho-Ruthenians in America." *A Historical Album*. Basil Shereghy, ed. (McKeesport, PA: 1979) 99.

<sup>23</sup>Abner Cohen. *Two Dimensional Man*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 23-34.

<sup>24</sup>St. Nicholas Day is celebrated by many groups originating in Eastern Europe. However, some groups from Northern and Western Europe also celebrate it. For example, some German Americans in Texas remember St. Nicholas Day.

<sup>25</sup>The traditional Easter food for Byzantine Catholics includes kielbasa, bacon and ham, hrutka (a special cheese made with milk and eggs), horseradish (colored with beet juice), hard-boiled eggs (dyed various colors), butter, salt, and a special bread, paska. Some people bake paska with two doughs—yellow and white—and put designs on the top using dough. See the examples below.



Before it is used for any meal, the paska, butter, salt and portions of the other foodstuff are blessed at the Easter Divine Liturgy. Some food is usually frozen to be eaten later in the year.

<sup>25</sup>The term “patch” was and is used to refer to the workers’ houses which were built around the coke ovens and coal tipples in Western Pennsylvania.

<sup>26</sup>GCU Messenger. 89, 1 1 (May 28, 1981) 3. “Russkij” is an ambiguous and disputed word. A. Pekar, in an article “Father Alexander Duklinovich—Ruthenian, Not A Russian,” *Byzantine Catholic World*, (April 23, 1978) 5, states that the term “Russkij” is used by some to mean “Russian” but that Father Duklinovich used the term to mean “Ruthenian.” Many do not like the name because they think it means “Russian” and they are definitely not that in their eyes. Paul R. Magocsi uses the term “Rusnaks” in a recent article “Misreading History: A Reply.” *Carpatho-Rusyn American*. IV, 3 (Fall, 1981) 6. Consequently, the foreign national identity of American society whereas Byzantine Catholic, being a religious identity, (as some would seem to hope) is not a disadvantage (and becomes less so when “Byzantine” is dropped and “Catholic” or “Christian” is emphasized). It seems that a differentiation in terms of a religious identity is *legitimate* in this society while diversity based on foreign national origin is not. See: Mark Schneider. *Ethnicity and Politics*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1979) 261.

<sup>27</sup>Colors may be important some of the time, but we cannot attach too much significance to them except in a specific context, because the colors of the booklet’s cover change. The 1980 cover, for example is beige and blue.

<sup>28</sup>The Ruthenian national emblem is divided into two fields. The right field has a red bear rampant on a white field. The left field consists of four blue and three yellow bars.



<sup>29</sup>As a further point about how Byzantine Catholics identify themselves, it should be noticed that many do not know “Ja Rusyn Byl.” But since they refer to themselves as Slovaks and use the Slovak anthem “Hej Slovaci!,” one should keep in mind that being Slovak can also be Byzantine Catholic.

<sup>30</sup>This song has been introduced and sung at other kinds of gatherings of Byzantine Catholics. For example, at the St. Nicholas' Day celebration, December 10, 1978, of St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, "Ja Rusyn Byl" was included with other traditional folksongs.

<sup>31</sup>Edward V. Rosack. "America Needs Us." *GCU Messenger*. LXXXCII, 26 (August 2, 1979) 1.

<sup>32</sup>"Po nasomu" translated as "for/of our own kind" is usually used by first and second generation members of the group as a self-ascriptive reference term. One informant consistently used the term to mark how individual names were really written and pronounced as opposed to the "American" spelling and pronouncements. Also, "Po nasomu" is the title of a column in the *GCU Messenger*. And, a recent advertisement of a recording of Slavonic Christmas carols reads: "Traditional Christmas Carols, sung both po nasomu and in English, are included in an album which features Bortniansky's 'Slava Vo Vysnich.'" *GCU Messenger*. LXXXCIII (November 13, 1980) 7.

<sup>33</sup>A. Pekar. "The Carpatho- Ruthenians in America." *A Historical Album*. Basil Shereghy, ed. (McKeesport, Pa., 1978) 116.

<sup>34</sup>I was unable to attend the 1980 pilgrimage. Friends collected pamphlets and other material of a religious nature, however. They did pick up a pamphlet "Carpatho-Ruthenians in America." I had collected the same in 1979. This same pamphlet had been handed out at various times in 1979-1980 in the Byzantine Churches. In 1981, I returned to do more observation and collecting. Outside of a brochure announcing the Golden Jubilee of the Byzantine Ruthenian Province, there were no explicit materials concerning Ruthenian identity.

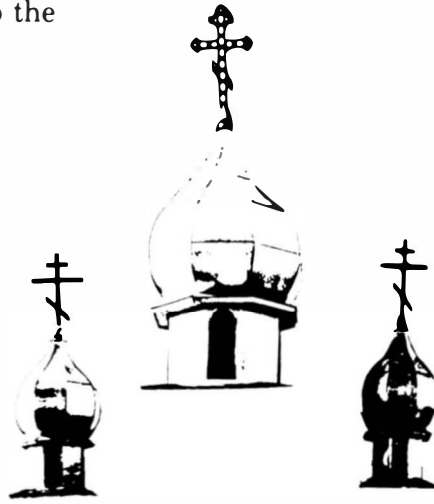
<sup>35</sup>If the individuals find that they (or their parents or grandparents) came from the same village, town or county, the interaction shifts to another basis. They are krajani (compatriots). They are no longer strangers.

<sup>36</sup>These were about an inch in diameter, white with blue design. In the center was a cross and around the edge of the button was written: O.L.P.H. Pilgrimage (Our Lady of Perpetual Help Pilgrimage).

<sup>37</sup>A similar phenomenon seems to have had force in the Old Country. There, whole villages are referred to as being "rusnaci" (rusnatsi), which was corrupted to "Russnaks" (see note 18); in other words, the village was Byzantine (Greek) Catholic.

<sup>38</sup>The language is Slovak and an eastern Slovakian dialect.

<sup>39</sup>The Byzantine Cross atop the three onion-shaped domes:



<sup>40</sup>In 1981, paperweights with Ukrainian pysanki motifs could be bought. Shoulder patches with an embroidered Byzantine Cross were on sale.

<sup>41</sup>There is some conflict among members of the group about “Duch.” The conflict indicates the close relationship (perhaps interpenetration) of national identity and religious identity via “Duch.” See the debate between Fr. Edward V. Rosack and Fr. Robert J. Bater in the *Byzantine Catholic World*, October 7, 1979, and November 25, 1979.

### Critique

Two primary assumptions appear to inform this descriptive article about Byzantine Catholic communities in the United States: (1) old traditions are maintained in new environments through “syncretism”; and (2) the symbols that emerge in those syncretisms are reflective of the world view of the ethnic group that created them.

Beginning with the name of the group in question, “Byzantine Catholics,” the author describes various symbols that illuminate political, social, cultural, and religious points of view of the various, mostly Slavic, national groups about whom he writes. Disposing rather quickly of what he calls the “private” ceremonies that “help to focus the identity of the group’s members and maintains social networks” the author moves to the “public” events which he claims serve as “public” symbols of identity: Byzantine Catholic Day and the Theotokos Pilgrimage (*Russkij Den*).

The description we are offered of the various symbols and events around which those public occasions are organized is provocative, but insufficiently analytical. The syncretism seems in these occasions to be composed of equal parts of religious ritual, loyalty to the “old country,” and a born-again American nationalism. Why? Why, this time to borrow a metaphor from the author, are the “new bottles for the old wine” shaped by nationalism? Was the old wine made from grapes of Slavic nationalism? Was Byzantine Catholicism always so imbued with patriotism, with nationalistic ritual, or is that element merely a response to the immigrant experience? There are many highly religious immigrant populations in this country whose syncretic adaptations have not included the intense nationalism that characterizes the populations at issue here. What differentiates Byzantine Catholics from those other groups?

One particular area suggests itself for further exploration in this context: we are aware that under czarist rule, certain Slavic nationality groups were inflamed against Jews for political ends through the church and by means of symbols. Infamous pogroms, for example, grew out of Easter/ Passover rituals. Is that bit of history germane to this analysis? Structural approaches of the sort undertaken by Skovira are of value and interest only if the descriptions of symbols and structures serve as vehicles for substantive analysis that leads to meaning. One is led by the article to wonder mightily why nationalistic emblems and rhetoric should figure so significantly in Byzantine Catholic religious structure—here or in the old country. We are not offered even a suggestion of an answer.

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University of California

### Critique

Unraveling the tangle of theses that shape the Skovira essay, “Some Symbols of Identity of Byzantine Catholics,” exposes not only the intersecting dimensions of ethnicity but also the complex nature of semiotics. Before we can accept the author’s concluding remarks on symbols, we need to consider the ramifications of these various theses. It so happens that the two major theses clash: one suggests ethnic assimilation; the other implies a strengthening of national identity. Perhaps some clarity can be achieved if we consider these themes separately.

If the purpose of the essay is to trace the gradual assimilation of the Ruthenians into a diverse ethnic population, one which adheres to the Byzantine Rite of the Catholic Church, the essay has succeeded only in confusing the dynamics of ethnicity with overt religious politics. In fact, assimilation is contra-indicated by the very definition of ethnicity Skovira uses. Furthermore, that definition—a self-ascribed identity—is supported by numerous examples of Ruthenian sensitivity to names associated with the group: Slovak, Hunky, Slavish, Rusnaks, Rusins, Rusyns. This same sensitivity emphasizes the vitality of the group concept. The importance of Ruthenian heritage is further confirmed by the conversations tracing individual ancestry in terms of county, town, or village in the Old Country. These conversations play a prominent role, according to Skovira, in the activities associated with the Theotokos Pilgrimage, Byzantine Catholic Day, and in the local parish. “Being from the same village or county,” Skovira maintains, “is an identity marker for individuals born in the United States, even for third or fourth generation people.” That the Ruthenians are quite aware of their backgrounds and profess pride in their history as a people is formally confirmed by the importance delegated to the singing of the national anthem on Byzantine Catholic Day. Throughout Skovira’s essay we can find support for the fact that the Ruthenians persist as an ethnic group, in spite of the fact that Skovira describes situations where he believes acculturation of the Ruthenians appears to be taking place.

If the purpose of the Skovira essay is to suggest that the symbols of identity associated with St. Nicholas Day, St. Thomas’ Sunday, and Green Sunday are in any way specific, private symbols of a Ruthenian parish, the essay has succeeded only in confusing public pan-Slavic religious traditions, upheld by the majority of churches in the Byzantine Rite as well as the Eastern Orthodox Church, with the communal functions of a particular group. Skovira does not provide any data on this local parish, so the personalized and private expressions of general traditions as they have adapted to local conditions cannot be evaluated. It is variation alone which will reveal the private individuality of a group. Not only is this parish in southwestern Pennsylvania not identified but no comparisons of activities with other parishes are made. That a private dimension exists is obvious; it is unfortunate that Skovira did not illustrate the specific, local, private symbolism of this parish.

If the purpose of Skovira’s discussion of private ceremonies is to demonstrate the eclipse of Ruthenian identity by a religious identity, the discussion succeeds only in demonstrating the obvious: among the religious, religious beliefs transcend earthly matters, and this priority is a cultural value shared by the Ruthenians as well.

If the purpose of Skovira's description of public, Byzantine Catholic events is to illustrate the gradual acculturation of the Ruthenians into a larger, more diverse, ethnic population, bound together by shared religious beliefs, the description illustrates that Byzantine Catholic Day is observed today not only by Ruthenians but other Byzantine Catholic groups, as is the Theotokos Pilgrimage. To specifically label these religious observances "Ruthenian" is inaccurate. Byzantine Catholic Day was and is celebrated predominantly by Ruthenians, as evidenced by references to Ruthenian heritage on leaflets, in programs, through songs, dances, the Slovak language, the Marianist hymn, and the Ruthenian anthem, but it is first and foremost a religious observance, and the Catholic Church will emphasize it as such. Participation in the Theotokos Pilgrimage, likewise, is open to all Catholics, even though the event was originally designed to preserve and nourish Ruthenian identity. A religious event of this kind officially transcends national identities, and that it does so is documented by Skovira.

In his conclusions Skovira suggests that identification with the Byzantine Catholic Rite reinforces national identities — be they Ruthenian, Rusyn, Slovak, Hungarian, or Croatian. The symbols of this shared religious life are seen as helping form national identity patterns. And, Skovira concludes, the symbols of identity reflect a continuing adaptation and transformation of meaning.

That a symbol is a channel of social, political, and psychological allegiance to the values and beliefs of a group is indisputable. Skovira has focused attention on several interesting issues; however, the symbols described in the essay are neither peculiar to the Byzantine Rite nor to the Ruthenians. They belong to many cultural and religious groups. Not one of the symbols cited can be designated as exclusively Ruthenian. Yet, without doubt, symbols revealing and nurturing ethnic identity have been described here. *How* these general symbols have acquired specific connotations must be examined. *How* these symbols function to reveal Ruthenian or exclusively Byzantine Rite identities requires closer scrutiny. The diversity of backgrounds among the Ruthenians themselves is most likely reflected in a multitude of variations in traditions and symbols. Skovira refers to variations in names, languages, and foods. Clearly, variety exists. The relationship between local and specific expressions of symbols and their more universal forms should be explored before conclusions are drawn. More cautious and formulated distinctions between general symbols, such as ceremonies, and particular symbols, such as linguistic salutations or physical gestures, should be developed and maintained. No recognition of the accommodation and localization of some of these celebrations and rites appears, and such recognition is necessary before a symbol of identity can be properly evaluated.

Although the material on the Ruthenians is fascinating and valuable in its own right, Skovira's treatment of the group is too general and too diversified to provide the reader with a clear assessment of the group, especially with regard to the dynamics of ethnicity and to the persistence and change of the folk symbols. Perhaps a closer study is warranted: an analysis of the specific religious and cultural symbols of a single parish might yield more evocative conclusions.

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### SONNETS POLONAISE II\*

Averting our Polish eyes  
rose-bordered self-owned homesteads  
compounded with Slavic sweat  
trooping to eight o'clock mass  
that propaganda warren  
abrogation of custom  
all for the greater glory

we skulked past those whitened  
fashioned of Anglo wealth  
benighted hooligans  
then on to convent school  
where surrender was taught  
language pagan mores  
of social adjustment.

Set loose like hungry rabbits  
against tomato patches.  
revenge for degradations  
with the northern oppressor  
for more acclimatizing.  
than all of those skirmishes

we'd instigate forays  
Rebelliously we sought  
continued our duel  
then back to school again  
That taught us more of stealth  
which left us so frightened.

—Albert Solomon

\*The editor notes that the author notes: A word of explanation about the form [of SONNETS POLONAISE II] . . . a traditional sonnet is fourteen lines of iambic pentameter (10 syllables per line). However, I experimented with the form. In Polish poetry a thirteen syllable line is popular; 7 syllables, a pause (caesura), and 6 syllables. Unlike English there is not as much emphasis on the regularity of the stressed syllable. Thirteen, then, became the magic number for my sonnets: a 13 syllable line; 13 lines for the sonnet; rhymes for lines 1-13, 2-12, 3-11, 4-10, 5-9, 6-8, 7 unrhymed. There is a natural pause after the first seven syllables of each line and a pause (though lesser) after the second six. It is an experimental form, unique to my proposed sonnet cycle.



## CANE BURNING

I woke  
to red sky last night.  
Madam Pele  
must be raging.  
The dull ruddy tinge  
on black night's edge  
upset me;  
until he said  
only cane burning  
somewhere near *Keaau*.

—Sheila Rosecrans

## AT MONTICELLO

Roman profiles  
are nothing to this face:  
*Chef d'Osage*, St. Memin, 1805.  
Smooth-plucked crown,  
brush of roached hair,  
slit ears hung with  
engraved shell and copper jingles,  
a great man presides  
over a corner  
of Jefferson's bedroom.

—Margaret C. Blaker

## **Racial Intelligence Testing and the Mexican People**

### **Gilbert G. Gonzalez**

In the 1920s and 1930s the Mexican school age population increasingly participated in the educational system of the U.S. Meanwhile, many first experiences of these children with the state came in the form of educational research. The intelligence testing movement had a brief history before then, one which was gathering much momentum and greatly encouraged by corporate foundations and the cooperation of university administrations. The rapid immigration in the 1920s and settlement of Mexicans into colonias of the Southwest coincided with the rise of academic research and publications on racial intelligence, as well as with the combination of mass compulsory education and intelligence testing, tracking, and curriculum differentiation. Many academic scholars, trained in the modern schools of psychology, contributed research for the construction of a pedagogy of social orderliness and economic efficiency through developing a "scientific" theory of racial intelligence. This study demonstrates how the labor process and social stability was of greater importance to scientific racists than the issue of race itself; furthermore, this study shows how intelligence research and IQ testing in schools were principally methods for ideologically and socially reproducing labor power for a capitalist economy.

Between 1922 and 1934, at least eighteen intelligence studies of Mexicans were published in various professional and scholarly journals. They formed a portion of some one hundred such studies carried out on blacks, Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Europeans by social scientists, primarily psychologists. The latter studies were carried out between 1890 and 1930, and formed a part of a larger mass of "scientific" evidence on racial differences. In terms of theory and methods the various studies were parallel. One can interchange subjects without changing the essence of the studies: whether Mexicans, Indians, "half-breeds," blacks or Italians, the studies were seemingly uniformly conceived and written. Their conclusions did vary, but only according to average IQ or behavioral trait under study. Thus, a range rather than identical IQs or traits were found to be the case for each particular racial group studied. However, one factor alone united the investigators: science had determined a racial inferiority among poor whites, Southern Europeans, and "non-white" nationalities and races.

Scholars such as E.A. Ross, Lewis Terman, E.L. Thorndike and Robert Yerkes, who had formed part of the vanguard of progressivism, were active in promoting scientific racism. Each supported and was active in campaigns for the forced sterilization of "social deviants." Their activities in eugenics were one aspect of their particular resolution to potential threats to the social order. Since, they claimed, the nature of the social order was a sum total of inherited characteristics, a basis for

order in society would be a form of birth control through forced sterilization. By 1907 fifteen states had passed sterilization laws, and by 1928 at least 8,500 people were sterilized through the enforcement of these laws.<sup>1</sup>

This was one extreme aspect of the progressive racism; the more popular form, and one which appears most often in the literature, was the simple identification of economically, socially, culturally, and physically distinct peoples as biologically inferior. This positive identification was supported through the findings of hundreds of research studies into the intelligence of racial and national minorities.

Scientific racism functioned quite well within the general goal of the popular functionalist sociological concept, the organic society.<sup>2</sup> Racism was essentially an ideological explanation for the social structure, and did not affect the distribution of property, but rationalized that distribution. Progressivism renounced the classical bourgeois theory of classes as a socioeconomic concept, yet poverty and wealth remained. The resolution of the contradiction rested with the nature of the individual, but not a random selection of individuals. Scientific racism postulated that the social structure was determined by the inherited nature of racial or national groups. The inherited characteristic was none other, and need be no other, than intelligence.

Through explaining the social order based upon intelligence and genes, scientific racism could simultaneously dissolve social discontent by socializing the racial and minority groups to the burden of poverty upon themselves. Furthermore, by artificially separating workers from each other outwardly on the basis of culture, race, or nationality, the working class would be segmented within itself. The first effect would be to place the explanation for the distribution of wealth upon the intelligence of racial groups. The second effect was to prevent the development of a political class consciousness within the working class.

Scientific racism, however, was only a temporary aspect of the testing movement and was not intrinsic to intelligence testing itself. The most important function of IQ testing was that of providing an ideology within the educational institution for purposes of training. The argument that Mexicans as a group were less intelligent was not necessary for tests to continue categorizing Mexicans as less "intelligent." The instrument was not intended to construct a racial hierarchy in society; its fundamental purpose was the realization of a politically and economically stable society and as such would reinforce working class children for commensurate socialization and skill training. Thus, scientific racism and intelligence testing continued to serve an identical function: sifting out the "likes and

unlikes” in the process of education.

In the incorporation of racism into acceptable scholarship, the academicians made race respectable as an explanation for the existence of the poverty they saw at the lower quarters of society. In their quest for social relevancy they accepted racism and went about formulating racist theories dedicated to the preservation of the social order. The result was that, as the university became increasingly important as a shaper of public policy, the prescriptions based upon academic research were given a stamp of legitimacy within educational practices. Research carried out through the auspices of the university and the progressive education movement were closely related phenomena, for it was really the university which simultaneously *produced racist research and provided much of the context for progressive expression and reform in educational practice*. In major universities throughout the nation, the notion that the scholar’s role was social and thus not only intellectual meant vast changes in the role of the university in the modern era.

Scholars investigating racial differences were products of an unequal society, a society that distributed wealth in terms of classes. They could not infer inferiority among the wealthy, or superiority among the poor, or even equality between them. The social scientists inadvertently assumed that one’s objective socioeconomic condition was the result of individual and not social causes. They accepted the contradiction between poverty and wealth in that the structure of society was viewed as a permanent and unalterable object which had as its basis the genetic inheritance of peoples. In seeking explanations of the social and economic organization, the scholars were also apologists for that organization because, *a priori*, the poor were poor for reasons that were not rooted in the manner in which society was organized. Society, for the social scientists, was structured upon individual and inherent human factors. Thus, the social structure of society was conveniently explained by the nature of the peculiar biological condition of each individual. This conclusion, based upon classic bourgeois individualism, formed the foundation for the scientific racism of the twentieth century.

Theories of racial differences ran the gamut from the hardnosed racism of Madison Grant to the “softer” versions of Otto Klineberg, who thought that racial differences in intelligence and behavior were possible, but needed to be verified. The importance of the theories is that they became an integral part of the philosophies and programs of public and private social agencies across the United States. Many of these “scientists” proposed that society base its well-being upon the “scientific theories” of racial differences and that through such an approach the social problems of society would be greatly reduced, if

not solved. However, classical bourgeois democracy was no longer viable. Lewis Terman concluded that the U.S. must reform its philosophy of equality among men, that it was mere sentimentalism which only served to endanger the progress of civilization and the "white race."<sup>3</sup>

Not surprising, and due in large measure to the efforts of the academic world, the "scientific theories" became commonly held ideas. And it must always be borne in mind that a racial theory of society appeared useful only because it served to reinforce the continuation of the social order. In the case of the social scientists who investigated racial differences, they were highly conscious of the need to preserve the social order from the apparent potential for political radicalism manifested through labor conflict, urban poverty, immigration, and other social problems. They became a vanguard defense of the social order by virtue of having rationalized its existence upon pseudo-scientific race theories.

### **Testing the Mexican People**

Under the tutelage of Lewis Terman at Stanford University, Kimball Young wrote a Ph.D. dissertation in 1919 entitled *Immigrant Groups in California*, which was later published by University of Oregon Publications (1922). It is an important study, not only because it characterizes the methods and conclusions of the racial studies of the period but also because of the proposals put forth for solution of the "immigrant problem." Young's proposals were not romantic or impractical; in fact, they had already become a significant part of the educational program in many cities across the United States—tracking and IQ testing.

Young made a comparative study of Mexicans, Italians, Portuguese, and white Americans. His subjects were eighty-eight pupils of the San Jose school system in grades four through eight. Young was a practical social scientist and he was therefore concerned with the practical educational question of non-American children. However, being a mainstream social scientist of the time, he accepted without much question the political charge that foreigners posed a potential danger to the continuation of the U.S. unless brought into a system of state sponsored social control. He wrote that

... there are two assumptions fundamental to our purpose: the first regarding general intelligence bears upon the experimental method and the interpretation of the results for educational ends; the second bears by implication, at least, upon the interpretation of the results for wider problems of immigration, racial mixture and future cultural progress.<sup>4</sup>

Again, it should be underscored that the principal characteristic to be studied and analyzed for the purposes of educational, social, and racial control was intelligence. The development of the concept intelligence by such scholars as James, Dewey, and Lewis Terman was easily accommodated to the specifications of racial research. In essence, the development of the concept intelligence was the theoretical break-through necessary for scientific racism to function. Consequently, the heart of racial theories of the period and of the twentieth century has been based upon the concept of intelligence.<sup>5</sup>

The method employed by the researchers was basically the intelligence test invented by Binet and Simon in France and further refined by Stern and Terman at Stanford. In nearly all educational studies on Mexicans, intelligence was the measurable factor. Not one researcher questioned the reliability of the testing device. Their university training taught them that it did measure and quantify intelligence and could thereby measure whether some races were less intelligent than others. Since intelligence could not be defined in scientific terms, tests incorporated a subjective set of criteria which defined what intelligence was supposed to be. The researchers were united in their premises that by nature certain people were inherently more intelligent than others, and were therefore superior.

The social problems which Young identified were manifested in immigration and urban settlement and the incorporation of immigrant children in schools. He showed, for example,

. . . the Italians and to a lesser degree the Portuguese and Spanish Americans have encircled San Jose, absorbing entire sections until in the districts comprising two-thirds of the city's boundaries are found large and populous neighborhoods occupied almost without exception by the Italian families. This dislocation of the population of these neighborhoods, which has been so typical in all American cities facing a similar situation, had profound and serious effects upon the public schools.<sup>6</sup>

William H. Sheldon and Don T. Delmet each published studies using similar arguments. Sheldon's words closely resemble those of Young:

In school systems having a large admixture of foreign children it is essential that the intelligence of the foreigners be known as accurately as possible, and that every effort be put forth to use such knowledge to the best advantage.<sup>7</sup>

Delmet further developed the "foreigner as a problem" thesis: "The Mexican child has always been a problem in the public schools and will continue to be one of the problems that our schools must face. Many schools consider Mexican children a liability . . . ." Scholars were similar in their conscious racial ideology; they investigated for

racial intellectual differences because they believed them to exist. Koch and Simmons's "A Study of Test Performance of American, Mexican and Negro Children" was aimed solely at defining racial distinctions, i.e., "The aim of the investigation is . . . twofold: first to make inter-racial and inter-national comparisons; and secondly to compare the city and rural-school populations for each race and nationality studied."<sup>9</sup>

Not one scholar defined intelligence scientifically, yet they were measuring intelligence. One study, "A Study of Causes of Retardation Among Mexican Children in a Small Public School System in Arizona,"<sup>10</sup> assumed an *a priori* mental inferiority among Mexicans. According to O.K. Garretson, the author, "These factors are: (1) irregular school attendance, (2) transientness of the Mexican family, (3) native capacity, or intelligence of the Mexican people . . . ."<sup>11</sup> Garretson, oblivious to reality as were many of his contemporaries, assumed *a priori* factors inherent within Mexicans which caused their demise. Even though the nature of agricultural production demanded a migratory population, one that moved from one area of production to another, Garretson disregarded that reality. He disregarded the manner in which workers were moved from place to place by deliberately set low wages. Garretson covered his eyes to labor contractors and employers' agents who traveled about seeking out available labor to transport to distant fields.<sup>12</sup> Garretson's causal theory can be interpreted as an ideologically sound interpretation of the class formation, because it corresponded with the fundamental ideological framework stressing individual responsibility. Mexicans were not rewarded through material gain nor could they be as long as cheap labor was demanded by the owners of farms or industries. To the apologists of the social structure, and of capitalism, Mexicans were identified as the cause of their failure, and in part, for the persistence of poverty in the society as a whole.

Thomas R. Garth, undaunted by the economic need for Mexican labor, in a study of the "industrial psychology of Mexicans" and focusing on symptoms of Mexican integration into the economy, wrote that Mexicans brought with them "sickness and diseases of contagious sort, poverty and . . . a tendency to get into problems of the law."<sup>13</sup> A corollary opinion held that Mexican children were "problems" within the educational system. One contemporary researcher wrote that the prevailing opinion among school officials concerning Mexican children was that they were "liabilities rather than assets." Had the steady development of mass compulsory education not occurred, the research and assessment of Mexican children might never have been carried out. Mexican children attended school only in relationship to the development of capitalism

itself, which Mexican labor, ironically, helped to develop. In all of the intelligence research upon Mexicans, that poverty which formed the immediate living environment of the subjects was considered to be a product of their own making, and further correlated with their intelligence.

Mexicans were recruited by large employers primarily as unskilled workers and thus it was only to be expected that they would form communities in areas where their wages permitted them to live. The distribution of the Mexican community into the poorer sections was a socioeconomic process characteristic of working class immigrants throughout the U.S.

Every intelligence study of Mexicans was carried out, in effect, upon the members of the very poorest of the working class. The economic burdens that the unskilled work force faced were large enough, but in addition to their inferior and ostracized social standing Mexicans found themselves penalized for their culture. Psychological testing was carried out in English and seldom took into account another language. In only one study did the researcher acknowledge that language was a factor which possibly lowered scores.<sup>14</sup>

"It is unusual for a Mexican child to be able to speak English when he enters kindergarten or first grade," acknowledged one researcher. Yet even though this was the case, only five of the eighteen studies mention language as a factor at all. And in only one was language thought to be a handicap. The remaining four dealt with language in differing manners. Garretson ignored his own statement that Mexican children in the first grades rarely spoke English and administered the test, nonetheless. According to Garretson, language should be acquired by the third grade by "normal children" and even though language was a factor in grades one and two, it was not a factor in grades three through eight. How he arrived at this conclusion was never described, but he added to his analysis by saying that "regardless of the method of accounting" the same results would inevitably obtain.<sup>15</sup> So much for the scientific method.

In studies by Paschal and Sullivan, Haught, and Goodenough, definite methods were devised in order to cancel out language as a factor. They administered non-language tests, considered to be "completely independent of language."<sup>16</sup> Paschal and Sullivan designed a "test or scale that can be applied by an American to the Mexican child or adult and despite his limited use of English obtain results as free from personal error as the theory of mental tests demands."<sup>17</sup> However, these scientists were not all willing to make such an adjustment in their method. In their studies they accused Mexicans of not adapting themselves "to our form of life" and further



that Mexicans refused to “use English or encourage their children to use it.”<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, they administered their “non-language” mental tests in the most unscientific of methods. For example, in one test composed of a battery of six, individual children were asked to arrange numbered blocks into their proper sequence after they were scrambled by the examiner. “The child was given no other instruction than ‘Put these back as quickly as you can,’ which was accompanied by motions indicating the task so that in case the words were not understood the child would nevertheless understand what she wanted.”<sup>19</sup> Three trials were given and each rearrangement of blocks varied. “It was customary to warn the child to go faster on the second trial, but no additional instruction or encouragement was given except to call ‘pronto’ before each trial got well under way.”<sup>20</sup> One can imagine what the “pronto” sounded like to the Mexican child; moreover, the emphasis on speed on all six of the tests must have been an unnerving situation for the children. One can only speculate what those 410 children felt as they were subjected to such a hostile examination or what the many hundreds of other children felt as subjects of the social sciences.

Haught was even more hostile toward the children in his study since the fundamental purpose for his research was to dispel the notion that language was a factor:

When intelligence tests are administered to both groups, the children of Spanish descent fall considerably below the standards obtained by those of Anglo descent. There is an inclination to assume that this does not mean an inferiority but a language difficulty encountered in taking tests.<sup>21</sup>

Haught’s inclination was consequently to assume that language was not a factor and that Mexicans were therefore truly innately inferior. He used this argument to support his conclusions: “Since the older children are handicapped as much as the younger there seems to be no justification for assigning the difficulty to inability to use or understand English . . .”<sup>22</sup> Thus, like Paschal and Sullivan, Haught was upset because the subjects were not “assimilating” quickly enough. He concluded that their intelligence was a barrier to learning English; non-use of English was sufficient reason for Haught to assume that language was not a cause of low intelligence! Consequently, the objective standard for intelligence was knowledge of English and even though he had stated that his investigation was to clarify the importance of language in psychological tests, he concluded that the command of the English language was as much the indicator of intelligence as the intelligence test itself.

Florence L. Goodenough also sought to define the role of language in

intelligence tests through developing a non-verbal examination. Her whole purpose was to prove that verbal tests were reliable and corresponded to non-verbal tests. Goodenough, who worked as psychologist for the Institute of Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota, tested 2,457 school children in 1928, of whom 367 were Mexican children from Los Angeles. Her results coincided with those of her colleagues who administered verbal tests. The non-language scale test, wrote Goodenough, “is completely independent of language” and that furthermore “the rank order of the various nationality groups corresponds very closely to that found by means of other intelligence tests.”<sup>23</sup> The data were overwhelming and converged from a number of separate points. Every possible instrument at the disposal of psychology to measure and quantify mental quality obtained similar results. Mexican children, indeed the Mexican people, were below average in intelligence, and were not deserving of the same educational opportunities as those of higher intelligence.

### **Conclusions and Proposals of The Racist Scholars**

“Extensive studies in the Southwest show that this condition, serious retardation, is a common one among Mexican children,”<sup>24</sup> according to one investigation. The research concluded that the average Mexican child was not normal in intelligence and that the educational “treatment” of Mexicans was to be adjusted to meet their particular level of intelligence. Haught found in 1931 that the “average Spanish child has an intelligence quotient of .79 compared with 1.00 for the average Anglo child.”<sup>25</sup> However, the liberal side of Haught was quick to advise the reader that “there are some Spanish children as bright as the very superior children.”<sup>26</sup> Garretson found that “retardation of the Mexican child . . . is from three to eight times as great as that of the American child . . . .”<sup>27</sup> Delmet concluded “that the Mexican children studied show, on the whole, greater school retardation and less acceleration, and are on the whole much older for a given grade than are white children.”<sup>28</sup>

Gamble’s study found “the average intelligence quotient for the Mexican was 78.75.” Furthermore, he stated, “This quotient is . . . approximately the same as that found by Garth.”<sup>29</sup>

Koch and Simmons, Sheldon, Young, McAnulty, Paschal and Sullivan, Goodenough and Garretson reached similar if not identical conclusions. Mexican children were inferior to “American” children on the most scientific of instruments, and were still as inferior when the language factor varied. These “facts” were not abstract theoretical conclusions, for it was always the intention of the

investigators that their conclusions have practical application in the socialization programs of the educational institutions.

Kimball Young's study is the classic practical scientific investigation, for his whole purpose in research was to solve practical social problems. After Young concluded that "Latins" were inferior to "Americans" he then suggested a reorganization within the educational system which would recognize this range of mental (and thus social) superiority and inferiority. He proposed that students be segregated on the basis of intelligence since "the problem of teaching the American children in terms of ability is far easier than with Latins who in no case can rise but a few points above the standard average intelligence . . . ."<sup>30</sup> Young questioned whether the difficulty of non-English speaking students was "one of language ... alone," or "one of differences of cultural heredity or does the principal cause lie in roots in which the environment has little play?" However, the question of the cause was not of concern to the immediate educational problems presented by "foreign" children. Young believed that the large number of average children were "clogging the school machinery" and that the teaching objectives of the schools become insurmountable by the presence of large numbers of "failures." He further contended that the real problem was not language, or the migratory type of laboring family characteristic of immigrants in the San Jose area, but "one of mental capacity, or general intelligence." Since Young's major interest, like that of other investigators, was not principally for making racial comparisons (although he certainly did make them) but in educational progress, he focused upon the "changes in the educational program" necessary to cope with the "facts" of lower intelligence among Latins. Educators, warned Young, "must take into account the mental abilities of the children who come from these racial groups." He was, however, satisfied that in "many school systems" a reorganization and "revamping of the curriculum" was taking place precisely on the basis of mental abilities of racial groups.

Young proposed that schools "educate" them to their capacity. Toward this end he recommended four basic reforms to be carried out involving (1) school policy, (2) administrative and supervisory changes, (3) curriculum changes accompanied by changes in teaching practice, and (4) "A public conscience of cooperation with the schools."

Under "school policy" Young suggested that a "new policy must grow from a careful sociological-educational survey of the localities, the economic life of the inhabitants, what the children of the present will be doing in later life in industry and agriculture or in business."<sup>31</sup> Young seemed to be borrowing from current educational thinking, specifically E.A. Ross's liberal progressive ideal of having the school become a center of social stability. Young further added that "the

general levels of intelligence in the school population that are to be instructed must be given highest priority in developing this new school policy." In essence, if this suggestion were to be carried out, each school would develop and adjust according to the immediate community's level of intelligence.

Secondly, Young suggested changes in school administration and supervision, which he described as the application of "standardized intelligence tests which should be applied throughout the elementary schools." This was "only suggested from the side of the schools predominantly foreign because it is there that the largest number of the backward are found."

Thirdly, after testing, Young proposed that a reorganization of teaching units must be made that took into account "at least for three classes of pupils, the mentally retarded, the normal, and the superior." Finally, Young urged that a program in Americanization with English classes as the central core of instruction be instituted in each city with significant enrollment of foreign children.

The practical effect of such proposals was to completely alter the depth of education, for what would result would be a state institution with enormous power over individual lives. As far reaching as these proposals appear, they are only significant when linked with the curriculum Young proposed; it was developed upon the following grounds: "Given the range of abilities measuring from those represented by the lowest twenty-five percent of the Latins to those found in the upper twenty-five percent of the non-Latins, what must be done to make the content of education more commensurate with the abilities of these pupils?"<sup>32</sup> Young's curriculum would be along the lines of (1) "Training for occupational efficiency," (2) "Habits and attitudes for social cooperation," and (3) "training for appreciation . . . of the arts and sciences for satisfaction and happiness." Each curriculum guide would have special meaning for the social classes of society; the poor, "less intelligent," would be trained for a "commensurate task in society; . . . for those who do not possess the capacities of the average school child, the curriculum must provide vocational training, and skills which will allow their best abilities to express themselves." Not only would those of "backward mentality" be trained to fill a manual vocation, they would also be given courses in science, literature, art and music, for there was always the possibility of "considerable appreciation of these cultural forms."

Ultimately, a paternalistic education system, given near absolute power over the destiny of the individual, was for Young (as for Ross, Terman and Thorndike) a necessary form of governmental intervention in order that the "American system" be saved through

identification and training of the “innately” more intelligent section of the population: “Let our segregation be along the lines of ability, never race as such, and with the proper opportunities for all, especially for those capable of leadership, the future of culture itself is secured.”<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusions

By the 1930s, programs identical to Young’s proposals were generally incorporated into the educational system of major cities across the U.S. A federally sponsored study published in 1933 reported that vocational courses were the commonly applied curriculum program for Mexican school children throughout the Southwest.<sup>34</sup> In the program of the Los Angeles educational system, schools with large Mexican populations, Young’s proposals were identical to the practices of that school system.<sup>35</sup> The massive attack upon the public education system by minorities in the 1960s was not surprising given the genesis of the educational programs for working class children. The system of education, as interpreted by progressives, was not a method for social mobility for the majority, but the maintaining of privileges for a select few. Simultaneously, schools would create stability, orderliness, and constant reproduction of a functional social and political consciousness. This effect was insured through the application of the intelligence tests and scientific racism.

The benefits to the existing social order were clear. If working class children could be taught to think of themselves as inferior, they would then be a consciously functional cell within the division of labor. A class society cannot have an entire population thinking of itself as totally “equal” and depending upon one’s socioeconomic class, schools reinforced a consciousness of assuming responsibility for being in a particular socioeconomic “level.” This psychological conditioning was fashioned for the working class by the intelligentsia who plied their trade in the interests of capital.

Young, as did other psychologists, went through a torturous route to arrive at the same conclusion that John Dewey had spoken of some years earlier. Dewey urged that children be given an education at the community’s socioeconomic level, proposing vocational education for working class children. Young followed Dewey’s theoretical construction, unconsciously perhaps, but the similarity of their conclusions are nevertheless clear.<sup>36</sup> The historical roots of unequal education, however, go back much further than Dewey. The classical political theorists of the bourgeoisie had long before understood that each class by virtue of its role in production could never be given an equal opportunity to education.<sup>37</sup> The dispensing of learning under capitalism, like the distribution of wealth, was logically unequal. The

premises of educational theory and practice, founded upon the need to preserve the social relations of production, insured an unequal education for the children of Mexican workers in the United States.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Mark Haller. *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963) 5.

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert G. Gonzalez. *Progressive Education: A Marxist Critique*. (Cincinnati: Marxist Educational Press, 1981).

<sup>3</sup>Gilbert G. Gonzalez. "The Historical Development of the Concept Intelligence." *Review of Radical Political Economy*. Vol. 11, No. 2 (Summer, 1979).

<sup>4</sup>Kimball Young. *Mental Differences in Certain Immigrant Groups*. (Eugene: University of Oregon Publications, 1922) 16.

<sup>5</sup>Gonzalez, "The Historical Development . . ."

<sup>6</sup>Young, 16.

<sup>7</sup>William H. Sheldon. "The Intelligence of Mexican Children." *School and Society*. XIX (1924) 140.

<sup>8</sup>Don T. Delmet. "Study of the Mental and Scholastic Abilities of Mexican Children in the Elementary School." *Psychological Monographs*. XXXV (1928) 1.

<sup>9</sup>H.L. Koch and R. Simmons. "A Study of Test Performance of American, Mexican and Negro Children." *Psychological Monographs*. XXXI (1928).

<sup>10</sup>O.K. Garretson. "A Study of the Causes of Retardation Among Mexican Children in a Small Public School System in Arizona." *Journal of Educational Psychology*. XIX (1928) 1.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>12</sup>See Mark Reisler. *By the Sweat of Their Brows*. (Greenwood Press, 1978); also, Rosalinda M. Gonzalez. "Chicanas and Mexican Immigrant Families: Women's Subordination and Family Exploitation" in Joan Jensen and Lois Scharf's *Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement 1920-1940*. (Greenwood Press, in press).

<sup>13</sup>Thomas R. Garth. "The Industrial Psychology of the Immigrant Mexican." *Industrial Psychology Monthly*. 1 (March, 1926) 183.

<sup>14</sup>Ellen Alic McAnulty. "Distribution of Intelligence in the Los Angeles Elementary Schools." *Los Angeles Educational Research Bulletin*. VIII (March, 1923) 91.

<sup>15</sup>Garretson, 32.

<sup>16</sup>Florence L. Goodenough, "Radical Differences in the Intelligence of School Children." *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. IX (1928) 395.

<sup>17</sup>F.G. Paschal and C.R. Sullivan. "Racial Differences in the Mental and the Physical Development of Mexican Children." *Comparative Psychological Monograph*. III (1923) 6.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>B.F. Haught. "The Language Difficulty of Spanish-American Children." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. XV (February, 1931) 92.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 92-95.

<sup>23</sup>Goodenough, 393.

<sup>24</sup>Herschel T. Manuel and Lois Hughes. "Racial Differences in the Mental and Physical Development of Mexican Children." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. XVI (August, 1932) 387.

<sup>25</sup>Haught, 95.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Garretson, 34.

<sup>28</sup>Delmet, 278.

<sup>29</sup>Leo M. Gamble. "The Mexican: An Educational Asset or an Educational Liability." *Los Angeles City Schools Educational Research Bulletin*. V (December, 1925) 10.

<sup>30</sup>Young, 20.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>34</sup>Annie S. Reynolds. "The Education of Spanish Speaking Children in Five Southwestern States." U.S. Office of Education *Bulletin*. No. 11 (1933).

<sup>35</sup>Gilbert G. Gonzalez. "The Relationship Between Monopoly Capitalism and Progressive Education." *The Insurgent Sociologist*. (Fall, 1977).

<sup>36</sup>Gilbert G. Gonzalez. "The Political Economy of Education." Claremont Reading Conference *Yearbook*. (Claremont Colleges, 1978).

## Chicano Psychological Assessment: A Critique of "Racial Intelligence and the Mexican People"

Anthony J. Cortese

Historically, scientific racism has provided reinforcement for maintaining the *status quo*. Researchers who sought to discover and explain racial difference in intelligence generally operated from a functionalist or social facts paradigm. Gilbert Gonzalez shows that "Racism was essentially an ideological explanation for the social structure, and did not affect the distribution of property, but rationalized that distribution." In sum, scientific racism indicated that the social structure was based on the genetic make-up of racial categories.

Researchers of intelligence in ethnic minority children assumed that Anglo children were inherently more intelligent than their Chicano counterparts, and, therefore, superior. Of course, intelligence tests were administered in English; researchers rarely recognized the cultural bias or language problems associated with such indices. Naturally, the results supported the bias of scientific racists--Chicano children, and through association, the Chicano people, were below average in intelligence.

More recent research results, however, comparing Chicano and Anglo children on Neo-Piagetian measures of cognitive development indicate no differentiation between the groups.<sup>1</sup>

The data imply that Chicano children develop cognitively the same, and at basically the same rate, as Anglo children. These results are contrary to the premises of scientific racism and the controversial positions of Jensen<sup>2</sup> and Shockley who argue that minority children are biologically inferior. That is, Chicano children cannot perform certain cognitive activities that their Anglo counterparts can because of genetic endowment. There is no rationale for such an ethnic prediction, unless one can make the case that intelligence may be variable from one cultural setting to another. Even this does not automatically lead to the hypothesis that Anglo children will score higher than Chicano children, unless one is merely guided by ethnic or racial prejudice which has no place in the objective study of psychological phenomena.

The sampling designs of comparative ethnic experiments on intelligence are also problematic. Gonzalez shows, for example, that "Every intelligence study of Mexicans was carried out upon the members of the very poorest of the working class." In such studies, working class Chicanos are often compared to middle-class and upper middle-class Anglos. When differences occur, they are treated as racial, when, in fact, they are socioeconomic differences. Given the fact that ethnic background tends to be confounded with socioeconomic status



and perhaps other background variables (e.g., the command of the English language), it is difficult to assess the possible independent effect of ethnicity or race on psychological indices.

The psychological assessment of ethnic or racial minorities is a politically sensitive topic. Attempts to demonstrate ethnic or racial differences in intelligence or moral development should be done in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. Moreover, the researcher ought to be extraordinarily sure of the data before suggesting that there are meaningful ethnic or racial differences on such highly evaluative measures as intelligence or moral development. Clearly, such assessments hold potentially explosive consequences. The consequences of making a Type I error, of accepting differences as real when none exists, could be, at the very least, quite harmful to the esteem of ethnic minorities. Obviously, it is salient to conduct research in psychological areas as carefully as possible, and to be temperate in one's conclusions.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>E.A. DeAvila, B. Harassy, and J. Pascual-Leone. *Mexican-American Schoolchildren: A Neo-Piagetian Analysis*. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1976).

<sup>2</sup>A.R. Jensen. "Do Schools Cheat Minority Children?" *Educational Research*. 14 (1971) 3-28.

## Critique

Educational institutions are representative microcosms of the society. If the society segregates, exploits, and excludes racial groups, then it can be expected that educational institutions will follow suit. The intelligence testing of the 1920s and 1930s was an academic response to eugenics theories and to contemporary political-economic policies related to immigration, miscegenation, and segregation. As Gonzalez concludes, the creation of intelligence tests and their application were not only an apologia but also a means to maintain the *status quo* in the society.

Since the 1960s most academicians have consciously avoided overt racist theories. However, the current political conservatism has established an atmosphere which encourages the retrenchment of social priorities by using "basic American" values as a means to correct economic inflation and recession. This re-cycling of basic values

includes the negation of civil rights for minorities under the guise of "equality" for the dominant Anglo sectors of the society, i.e., the retrenchment on the voting rights legislation, the granting of tax exempt status to segregated white institutions, and the indulgence of high unemployment. Examples of this type of conservative activity can also be identified in public institutions as well; consider the California Community College (CCC) system and the current efforts to clarify or re-define its mission. The efforts to arrive at a definition of mission come from the state legislature, the state Department of Finance, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the state Faculty Senate, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and the local community college districts. The focal issues are limited financial resources, the types of programs and courses offered, and who should be allowed to benefit from the institutions, i.e., the composition of the student body.

Some critics assert that the CCC have tried to be all things to all people; and since resources are limited, more focus should be given to areas such as transfer education and the reduction or elimination of programs which have lower priority. Other critics will agree with the statement, adding that the "open door" policy must not continue. On the surface, these budget minded critiques seem logical. However, which programs will be eliminated and which students will face a closed door? Will these proposals have a greater negative impact on racial minorities than on Anglo students?

During the past fifteen years, the California Community Colleges have assumed the responsibility to accommodate their institutions to the needs of the community; this has included minorities. Twenty-five percent of the California Community Colleges' enrollment is comprised of minority students. This is proportionately more equitable than that of other systems of postsecondary education in California. However, it is not at parity with the state's minority population of thirty-four percent. In addition, Chicanos/Latinos comprise nineteen percent of California's population but only ten percent of the community college enrollments. They are the single most under-represented minority group and are enrolled at roughly forty-seven percent below their parity level.<sup>1</sup> In 1970, approximately seventy percent of Chicano/Latino students in institutions of higher education (IHE) in California attended community colleges.<sup>2</sup> This high rate of attendance is probably due to the role given to the community colleges by the *Master Plan for Higher Education* as that of screening students to see which are capable of academic work at the University of California (UC) or the California State University systems.<sup>3</sup> A consequence of this role is the tendency to segregate higher education along class and racial lines: "There is already a tendency for junior colleges to enroll the student

whose father is a skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled worker, and the four year colleges to enroll the student whose father is in a professional or managerial position.”<sup>4</sup>

The increase in minority enrollments at the community colleges is in itself a step towards equity; however, these enrollments have not had the desired impact of establishing a professional ladder into the four year institutions and graduate programs. Now even these minimal gains are in jeopardy as state-wide proposals for tuition, increased fees, limitation of basic skills/developmental courses, admissions competency criteria, and many others could have a greater negative impact on services which are targeted for minorities or effectively prevent them from entry into the institution or diminish their opportunity or success after matriculation. Many will argue that these intended cost-effective proposals are not directed against minorities, and are not racist, but egalitarian in nature.

It is vital that minority educators examine the long-term effects of the various proposals affecting not only the California Community Colleges but all levels of education. If scholars can determine the educational detriment and the social impact of intelligence testing in the 1920s and 1930s, then it is also possible to analyze the potential impact of the return to basic values movement. Gonzalez identifies a twelve-year period in which one hundred intelligence studies of minorities were published. Can these studies, as means to maintenance of societal institutions, be compared to the return to basic values movement? Will this new movement serve the same purposes? What action will minority educators take?

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De Anza College

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Office of the Chancellor, California Community Colleges. “Guidelines for Bilingual Cross-Cultural Curricula Options.” Unpublished Ms., 1982.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald W. Lopez and Darryl O. Enos. *Chicanos and Public Higher Education in California*. (Sacramento: California Legislature, 1972) 17.

<sup>3</sup>*Report of the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education in California*. (Sacramento: California Legislature, 1973) 60.

<sup>4</sup>Ford Foundation Task Force. *Report on Higher Education*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971) 59.

## Critique

Gilbert Gonzalez's "Racial Intelligence Testing and the Mexican People" is a major contribution in analyzing the educational factors which result in social inequality among the Mexican population in the U.S. For decades, the power elite has espoused the myth that educational achievement for minorities is the key to social upward mobility. Instead, Gonzalez views education as a system which perpetuates and maintains racial and class divisions in our society.

Other writers including David Smith (*Who Rules the Universities?*), Martin Carnoy (*Schooling in a Corporate Society*), and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (*Schooling in Capitalist America*) have provided evidence of the relationship between the ruling class (capitalists) and their control over the policies and objectives of education. When we examine closely the role of education, its class nature becomes quite clear. In elementary and high school, instruction serves three purposes: (1) cultural assimilation of minority children; this includes the lack of bilingual multicultural instruction and exclusion of minority contributions to U.S. society and textbooks which reflect middle-class values; (2) loyalty to the American political system, i.e., flag salute, assemblies, civics classes, student government, and the belief that authority is always right; and (3) the protestant ethic of preparation for the workplace. This regimentation and rewards system is based on hard work. Indeed, "good citizenship" is defined as not disturbing others, showing self control, working independently, being prompt and courteous, making good use of time and facing the consequences of tasks left undone.

Furthermore, as Gonzalez points out, I.Q. testing and academic tracking are historical methods used to program students. The occupational tracks include vocational, business, secretarial, homemaking, shop, ROTC (military), and college preparation. Gonzalez refers to these methods as "ideologically and socially reproducing labor power for a capitalist economy." One of the limitations of Gonzalez's article is that it does not continue to demonstrate tracking into higher education. In California, higher education is clearly stratified into community colleges, state universities, University of California, and private institutions. A student's acceptance into any one of these sub-categories is based on entrance exams, financial resources, and high school achievement—all of which discriminate against minority and working-class students. Each of the sub-divisions of higher education produces a particular class of people: community colleges (vocational), state universities (social services), University of California (professional and managerial), and private universities (domestic and foreign policy makers). William Dumholff's *Who Rules America?* shows that the corporate

and governmental leadership of the United States attended elite private colleges.

With the recent increase in student fees, stiffer entrance requirements, and required higher test scores, education is becoming less attainable for minority and working-class people. The major changes needed are the elimination of a stratified educational system—I.Q. testing, tracking, the influences of business interests on the Board of Trustees and Board of Regents, and discriminatory entrance examinations.

The major weakness of Gonzalez's article is that he fails to provide evidence of the structural integration between economic interests and education. While Gonzalez implies the class nature of education, he presents minimal proof of the direct involvement of capitalism upon education. Overall, Gonzalez's article is an excellent essay on the structural obstacles which continue to hinder Mexicans from acquiring equal education.

Richard Santillan  
California State Polytechnic  
University

### BLIND MAN'S POINT OF VIEW

Without mine eyes, no longer  
could I choose whom to greet.  
What difference, then, the color  
of the hand, that leads me  
across the busy street?

— J. L. (Pat) Roofff  
Submitted by Kay L. Roofff-Steffen

## Contributors

LOUIS BRYAN has published in a number of small literary magazines such as *The Poet*, *New Worlds Unlimited*, and *Small Pond Magazine*. He loves jazz, classical music, jogging, travelling, trains, reading, exotic foods, off-beat people, the Pacific Northwest, New York City, money, beer and wine, warm climates, solitude, Toni Morrison, Gustave Flaubert, Graham Greene, Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, and seeing his own work in print.

ANTHONY CORTESE is an assistant professor of sociology and director of Chicano Studies at Colorado State University. He is currently investigating moral judgment in Chicano, black, and Anglo young adults and directing a video tape on Chicanos, blacks, and women.

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KRISTINE MARTIN is a teacher from the Commonwealth Teaching Service in Canberra, Australia. After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Newcastle, N.S.W. in 1971, she taught in secondary schools. In 1979 Martin took leave to pursue graduate studies and in 1981 completed her Master's of Art degree at Iowa State University. Her M.A. thesis, *The Search for Identity in West African Literature*, prompted her to examine the literature of other indigenous peoples. She taught English composition at Iowa State University during the 1981-82 academic year and will return to Australia in August, 1982.

OLIVIA MERCADO is Division Dean of Intercultural Studies at DeAnza College. Her primary academic interest is in Chicano Studies.

J. L. ROOFF is a sixty-one year old general contractor in Waterloo, Iowa. "Blind Man's Point of View" is the first (and only) serious poem that he has written. As chair of a human relations committee in Waterloo, the nation's fifth most segregated city (according to studies in the early 1970s), Rooff wanted to prove that skin color does not matter.

SHEILA ROSECRANS lives in Boston where she works for the *Wall Street Journal*, serves on the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Community Church, and is active in gay and lesbian politics.

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## THE EDITOR NOTES

In keeping with the format of *Explorations in Ethnic Studies*, this issue includes articles with critiques of each. Although the articles are referred before acceptance, the editors believe that additional responses provide both the writer and the reader with ideas to continue research in the same area or to apply the concepts to yet new projects. We invite readers to respond to the articles included in this issue and to indicate their own willingness to write critiques of future articles.

Research is an on-going process; it is descriptive and not definitive, and change is what makes the study of ethnicity important. As Gilbert G. Gonzalez points out in "Racial Intelligence Testing and the Mexican People," the research of a generation ago is not valid for contemporary society. Skovira wrestles with the notion of Byzantine Catholic identity formation as it is influenced by nationalism and religion—clearly a centrifugal force in the United States. Martin shows the importance of teaching the works of indigenous writers to further understand the ethnic studies process.

At the June meeting of the Executive Council in Santa Clara, California, the Council accepted a recommendation from the editorial board to include only articles and critiques in future issues of *Explorations in Ethnic Studies*. Poetry which has already been accepted will appear in the January issue, but subsequent issues will contain no poetry. This decision was made after serious consideration of the purposes of the journal. Although the poetry of past issues has been "good for the soul," *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* is not a literary journal. There are many small press outlets for poetry, and there are few journals which publish non-specialized research on ethnicity.

To encourage the dissemination of research on ethnicity, please help us by checking with the library at your institution to see if it subscribes to NAIES publications. If not, point out to the selections officer that orders can be placed directly with NAIES or through several subscription services, for it is important for students and researchers to have access to these multidisciplinary materials.

— Charles C. Irby

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