

EXPLORATIONS IN ETHNIC STUDIES



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Griggs and Corrothers: Historical Reality and Black Fiction*

James Robert Payne

Sutton E. Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* and James D. Corrothers's "A Man They Didn't Know" are two early Afroamerican fictions which suggest a black alliance with foreign powers in the face of unrelenting racial injustice at home.¹ *Imperium in Imperio*, published in 1899, has been described as "the first political novel" by a black American;² and "A Man They Didn't Know," appearing in 1913, is probably the first Afroamerican fiction to suggest a specific alliance between American blacks, groups in Mexico, and the Japanese. Sutton E. Griggs is currently undergoing rediscovery, and *Imperium in Imperio* is by now well known to students of Afroamerican literature, if not to students of American literature in general. However, aspects of the historical context of *Imperium in Imperio* have been overlooked by literary scholars at significant cost to a complete appreciation of what Griggs is doing in the novel. Corrothers's "A Man They Didn't Know" has been overlooked in all respects. This highly interesting fictional work, comparable in important respects to Griggs's novel, needs to be brought to the attention of students of American culture of various disciplines, and, like *Imperium in Imperio*, to be fully understood, it must be read in its historical context.

In *Imperium in Imperio* Griggs projects a secret, underground organization of blacks, the Imperium, the purpose of which is to defend the rights of Afroamericans. In despair over seemingly unyielding American racism at the end of the nineteenth century, a militant leader of the Imperium eventually proposes that the organization declare war on the United States and, working in concert with "foreign allies," attempt to wrest Texas and Louisiana from the Union. The Imperium would then proceed to set up a black state in Texas. Louisiana would be ceded to the Imperium's foreign allies in return for their support. Such bold, imaginative thematic development has led to Griggs's novel being described "as one of the major

contributions to black fiction before the [Harlem] Renaissance years,” and it is seen as a clear precursor of present-day black militant attitudes.³ The publication date of *Imperium in Imperio* is 1899, and it opens with an authenticating note (actually part of the fiction) which describes the “documents and papers of the Secretary of State of the Imperium” on which it is purportedly based. This opening note is signed “Sutton Griggs” and is dated March 1, 1899. Thus, the actual publication date of the novel and the internal, fictional date of the “authenticating note” coincide with the year following the Spanish-American War.

The Spanish-American War was motivated by a variety of interests and supposed interests. President McKinley’s new Republican administration may have seen war with Spain as a way of unifying the country and diverting popular attention away from the government’s blatant favoritism toward monopolies. William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, who sensationalized war news in their “yellow” journals for a public hungry for sensation, may have seen the war as a means of boosting circulation. Many Americans were taken in by the popular slogan “Remember the *Maine!*” And, of course, some Americans sincerely wished to help Cuba gain its freedom from Spanish imperialism.⁴ Much of black America held special, if ambivalent, attitudes toward the war. Cuba was viewed by some black Americans as largely a black nation deserving assistance in its struggle for independence. Yet in the final years of the nineteenth century, an era of rampant segregation, lynching, and disenfranchisement of blacks, many in the Afroamerican community questioned the wisdom of supporting their country’s involvement in foreign adventures while there were such immense, unsolved problems at home. Black spokesmen asked why their people should be called upon to make sacrifices in war for a country that refused to protect its black citizens.⁵

The murder of a black federal official in South Carolina in February 1898, just when excitement about the impending war was spreading, is indicative of the vulnerability of America’s black community in the era. Early in 1898 Frazier B. Baker, a black Republican, was appointed postmaster at Lake City, South Carolina. Local whites lost no time in expressing strong displeasure over the appointment, many proving their point by carrying their mail to a nearby town for posting. On February 22 a mob of whites set fire to Baker’s house and proceeded to shoot at members of his family as they tried to escape. Baker and his infant son were killed; his wife and three other children were wounded. The incident provoked a national outcry. Black

spokesmen believed that even though the national government had been notoriously lax in protecting black Americans since the end of Reconstruction, federal authorities would act promptly and vigorously to apprehend and prosecute Baker's assailants because he was a postmaster. Black leaders in Chicago dispatched Ida Wells Barnett, a nationally prominent anti-lynching activist, to Washington to lobby for effective action by the attorney general. But Barnett soon learned that her efforts would fail. Excitement about "avenging the *Maine*" and with helping the Cubans had diverted attention away from such domestic problems as the murder of a small town postmaster.⁶ But black Americans remembered the Baker lynching and others perceived lynchings to be on the increase. One black newspaperman summarized his view of the situation with "if 'Remember the Maine' was 'the white man's watch-word,' then 'remember the murder of postmaster Baker . . . should be the Negro's.'" ⁷

The persuasiveness and strength of Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio*, especially its imaginative concluding section, derive to a significant degree from Griggs's adept use of immediate historical contextual materials. Griggs locates his vividly imagined militant black organization, the Imperium, near Waco, Texas, in what to outward appearance is Thomas Jefferson College, Griggs's ironic nod to an earlier American revolutionary thinker, one who tried to ban slavery while keeping slaves himself. The leaders of the Imperium, like many American blacks of the time in fact, took an early interest in the Cuban nationalist insurrection which preceded the Spanish-American War because, as the narrator states, "the Cubans were in a large measure negroes."⁸

When the United States Congress met in April 1898 to consider resolutions that would result in war with Spain, the Congress of the Imperium, like a "shadow" government,⁹ met in special session to consider what should be its attitude "to this Anglo-Saxon race, which calls upon us to defend the fatherland and at the same moment treats us in a manner to make us execrate it" (207). While the Imperium shares the concerns of the United States Congress regarding the supposed attack on the Maine and with helping Cuba gain independence, the black leadership is also concerned with the epidemic of lynchings, about which the national government says it can do nothing. The Imperium is particularly concerned with the murder of one of its members, Felix A. Cook, whose seat in the meeting hall remains dramatically vacant and is draped in black. In developing the figure of Cook, Griggs clearly draws on the contemporary incident of the murder of Frazier B. Baker. Griggs's Cook, like

Baker, was appointed postmaster of Lake City, South Carolina, by President McKinley. And as in the antecedent Baker case, Cook was assassinated by a local mob which could not stand the idea of a black man as a postmaster.

Because the Frazier Baker murder is well-documented, we can observe just how Griggs reworks the historical material for integration into his fiction. Most remarkable is how Griggs, though writing a novel of black militancy and protest, actually tones down the attack on the postmaster and his family. In the actual case, not only the postmaster but also his infant son were killed by the mob. In Griggs's fictional representation only the postmaster is killed (202). Griggs wants to present the horrors of American racism to his readers, yet he omits a most gruesome detail of his historical material antecedent to the scene. Perhaps Griggs believed that his black readership, which was well-established,¹⁰ would not care to have every abhorrent detail of the lynching rehearsed, the likes of which would be already too well-known in the Afroamerican community of the day. And perhaps Griggs intuited that if he offered the full truth, many not of or not directly conversant with the Afroamerican community would turn away in disbelief. Ironically, a fuller presentation of what actually happened, including the shooting of the infant, might have made the novel seem "unrealistic" and exaggerated to some readers. In short, if he had used more of the grotesque actual detail of the Baker lynching, Griggs might have lost some of his readers to his essential truth.

Facing Cook's vacant chair, leaders of the Imperium Congress debate their proper course of action. The spokesman for a line of relative moderation, Belton Piedmont, makes a strong speech, but Bernard Belgrave ultimately wins the Imperium's endorsement of his revolutionary position advocating that the secret organization join with America's foreign adversaries in war on the United States to force the concession of Texas as the basis of a separate black state. Although Belgrave's plan may strike some as quite improbable, recent work in Afroamerican studies suggests its possible association with specific historical phenomena immediately antecedent to Griggs's representation of it. Willard B. Gatewood in *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden, 1898-1903* presents an assertion of Clifford H. Plummer, a black American spokesman at the time of the Spanish-American War, that in disgust with *fin de siècle* American segregation, lynching, and disenfranchisement,

... a proportion of the more enthusiastic of the colored people of New England and some of the Middle and Southwestern States

were ready to make an armed revolt against the United States and to espouse the cause of Spain It was the purpose of some of the people to raise troops as quietly as possible, to get out of the country in detachments, and to join the forces of Spain.¹¹

If we read *Imperium in Imperio* as working in tension with Afro-american historical phenomena, we see that Griggs is projecting in his fiction a potential radical alternative to a “loyal” black response to the Spanish-American War. What if those black citizens who had helped America acquire an empire from Spain had joined with the foreign adversary to force the United States to cede to a black Imperium two of its states? Appearing a few months after the important black role in the Spanish-American War was acknowledged in special ceremonies and in newspaper accounts across the country,¹² *Imperium in Imperio* challenges readers with the idea that black Americans have the potential of playing in a different sort of role in a foreign war than they did in 1898.

On the eve of World War I James D. Corrothers, now known primarily as a poet, published a remarkable short story entitled “A Man They Didn’t Know” in the NAACP journal *The Crisis*. Recalling *Imperium in Imperio* in its essential thematic concerns, Corrothers’s story opens with a presentation of an America in which victims of domestic racism, blacks and Hawaii-born Japanese-Americans, have joined with foreign victims of American expansionism, Mexicans, to overthrow Anglo-Saxon domination. Black American army units stationed along the southwestern border join forces with Mexicans and fire back across the border on American towns. In Hawaii, Nisei, “certain renegade whites and a wholesale importation” of blacks join forces to take political control of the islands with a view to annexation of Hawaii to Japan.¹³ The dissident blacks and Nisei and their Mexican allies gain the support of Japan, the only major nonwhite industrial power of the era, and soon units of the powerful Japanese navy are spotted in Hawaii and at a secret Japanese coaling station in Baja California. The end to unquestioned Anglo-Saxon domination of North America becomes obvious to all as black groups in Chicago demonstrate and make specific demands on the national government.¹⁴

Faced with spreading calamity, the American President calls in black leaders to try to find out how he can regain the confidence of black America. After a frank discussion and after the President’s proposal that the black spokesman Dr. Packer T. Jefferson be called upon to help is rejected as unsuitable, Jed Blackburn, a well-known former

boxer, is proposed as the man to help restore black support for the national government. Blackburn accepts and is made a colonel in the United States Army.¹⁵ He is successful in rallying significant Afro-american support for the national government, although dissident blacks continue hostilities. As leader of a large black contingent in what Corrothers pointedly describes as a multiethnic American army, Blackburn is instrumental in defeating the “yellow peril” (86), the alliance of dissident blacks, Nisei, Mexicans, and Japanese that is threatening the West Coast and the Southwest.

A summary of “A Man They Didn’t Know,” as we see, clearly suggests that on the eve of the Great War Corrothers is in effect developing the same basic theme that Griggs developed in his Spanish-American War era novel *Imperium in Imperio*. Black America is not to be taken for granted. The Afroamerican community has much to offer the country, as a figure like Jed Blackburn suggests. But chaos and destruction will be the result if injustice is perpetuated. More specifically, when we consider “A Man They Didn’t Know” in its particular historical context, Corrothers has elaborated on the “Yellow Peril” nightmare.

In January of 1908 the German Kaiser Wilhelm announced to the American Ambassador that he had evidence that thousands of Japanese soldiers were dispersed through Mexico and would move toward and attempt to capture the Panama Canal at an appropriate time. The Kaiser’s fabrication was part of an elaborate scheme which entailed promoting war between the United States and a Japan in alliance with Mexico—Mexico would be the primary battle ground. The Kaiser imagined that once American troops crossed the Mexican border, latent anti-Yankee sentiment would swell to a crescendo in Latin America, ending American predominance in the hemisphere and opening the way for more German trade and influence.¹⁶

Although the existence of a secret treaty between Japan and Mexico in the first decade of this century has not been established by historians, through various publicity devices including fake intelligence reports and press leaks the Kaiser managed to work on American xenophobia to the point that, as historian Barbara Tuchman put it, the “Yellow Peril became as popular as the turkey trot.”¹⁷ Part of the American fear of a Japanese-Mexican conspiracy was surely a projection from a guilty conscience over our treatment of the two countries. Restrictive laws on entry of Japanese laborers into the United States and restrictions on Japanese land ownership in California were of course more recent than the American annexation

of the territories of northern Mexico that now make up the U.S. Southwest, but all these were clear American actions against the two “Yellow Peril” nations that were out to get “us.” And, too, American anxieties were aggravated by actual friendly contacts between Japan and Mexico during the period. The Mexican dictator Huerta was furnished arms by Japan to President Wilson’s great annoyance. And, seeming to confirm America’s worst fears, during a state visit to Mexico in 1911, the Japanese Admiral Yashiro toasted the fraternity of the Mexican and Japanese armies and navies and spoke darkly of common action against a common enemy. Everybody knew who the common enemy was.¹⁸

When we consider “A Man They Didn’t Know” in history we see that in essence Corrothers has posed to himself the question, how might Afroamerica fit with the “Yellow Peril” anxiety? Significantly, he has ranged black Americans on both sides in his fantasy exploration of the question. Some dissident blacks ally themselves with Mexicans and Nisei to try to overcome Anglo-Saxon rule. Yet the powerful figure of Jed Blackburn is at the end depicted as leading black troops in concert with a multiethnic national force which overturns the “Yellow Peril.” Americans in general, Corrothers suggests, do not recognize how much men like Blackburn might contribute. He is “a man they didn’t know” symbolizing a people they didn’t know (138). Thus, in effect, in his political fantasy Corrothers offers his country a choice: Recognize the man, the people, it does not know, or expect ultimate chaos.

Sutton Griggs’s *Imperium in Imperio* and James Corrothers’s “A Man They Didn’t Know” are two early black fictions that are likely to strike the reader who approaches them apart from their historical context as rather improbable, at best escapist fantasies. When we study such works in relation to historical context, a context which is too often overlooked for early black fiction, our aesthetic appreciation of this literature is enhanced, and we begin to achieve more of a grasp of its political significance. For example, aesthetically, we put ourselves in a position to admire how imaginatively historical incidents like the Baker lynching may be drawn upon and modified for thematic purpose. When we study the historical context of “A Man They Didn’t Know” we open ourselves to the aesthetic pleasure of seeing with what bold imagination Corrothers answered the question he in effect posed to himself before writing the story: How would black America respond to the “Yellow Peril” if such a threat indeed materialized? It helps for the reader to know what the “Yellow Peril” was, and, perhaps even more, it helps to know something about black

America in the pre-World War I period. Only when we consider historical context, not just mainstream American history but Afro-american and other ethnic American histories, can we begin to fully appreciate the art and imagination with which writers like Griggs and Corrothers invested their work. And when we begin to work to understand the historical grounding of such early black fictions, we put ourselves in a position to start to take seriously their political implications. We are able to see most clearly how Griggs and Corrothers, in their fictions deriving from historical particulars of the pre-World War I era, present black America as being the potentially determining force for chaos or order in the nation.

Notes

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¹Sutton E. Griggs. *Imperium in Imperio* (1899; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1969). James D. Corrothers. "A Man They Didn't Know." *The Crisis*. 7 (1913-14) 85-87, 136-38. Arlene A. Elder. *The "Hindered Hand": Cultural Implications of Early African-American Fiction*. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978) ch. iii, gives a very useful biographical and critical introduction to Sutton Griggs. The best introduction to James Corrothers is still his autobiography *In Spite of the Handicap* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1916).

²Hugh M. Gloster. *Negro Voices in American Fiction*. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1948) 58.

³Addison Gayle, Jr. *The Way of the New World: The Black Novel in America*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975) 66-67.

⁴Samuel Eliot Morison. *The Oxford History of the American People*. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965) 800.

⁵On black America's attitudes toward and involvement in the Spanish-American War, see Willard B. Gatewood, Jr. *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden, 1898-1903*. (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1975).

⁶Gatewood, 31-32. George Brown Tindall, *South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900*. (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1952) 255-256.

⁷Gatewood, 109, 32.

⁸Griggs, 201. Subsequent page references to the novel appear within parentheses in the text. Cubans were indeed "in a large measure

negroes”; the actual black percentage of the Cuban population was virtually one third, according to the 1899 census as cited in Hugh Thomas. *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 1117.

⁹Griggs’s Latin title *Imperium in Imperio*, Government within a Government, suggests the nature and function of the secret organization.

¹⁰In his introduction to the Arno Press reprint of *Imperium in Imperio* (Griggs, ii) Hugh M. Gloster notes that Griggs’s “novels, though virtually unknown to white Americans of his time, were probably more widely circulated among Negroes than the works of Charles W. Chesnutt and Paul Laurence Dunbar.”

¹¹Herbert Aptheker, ed. *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. (New York: The Citadel Press, 1951) II, 824. Quoted by Gatewood, 210. Gatewood notes that Plummer’s statement still needs to be corroborated with additional evidence.

¹²Gatewood, 105-107.

¹³Corrothers, 85-86. Subsequent page references to the story appear within parentheses in the text.

¹⁴Thus, Corrothers’s “A Man They Didn’t Know,” with its explicit fictional projection of a strong challenge to Anglo-Saxon dominance in North America before World War I, clearly prefigures themes in recent black fiction, such as Sam Greenlee’s *The Spook Who Sat by the Door*. (New York: R.W. Baron, 1969) in which black dissident groups forcibly challenge the ruling order. In both Corrothers’s fiction of 1913 and Greenlee’s fiction of 1969 the black revolt is spearheaded by men trained in the United States Army.

¹⁵“Dr. Packer T. Jefferson” appears to be a satiric reference to Booker T. Washington, the prominent moderate black spokesman of the pre-World War I era who had close working relationships with numerous top political and business leaders. Jed Blackburn’s being made colonel is highly significant in that it represents an important concession in an era when blacks were generally excluded from the rank of commissioned officer in the regular army.

¹⁶Barbara W. Tuchman. *The Zimmermann Telegram*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1958) 30-32.

¹⁷Tuchman, 34, 37.

¹⁸Tuchman, 41, 34.

Critique

Professor Payne, in his two selections of seminal writings from the pre-World War I period, has performed a remarkable service for *Explorations* readers in presenting significant work tersely argued, well-written, and comprehensively considered. Griggs's and Corrothers's fiction contains all of the possibilities for political change that were considered during the 1960s and 1970s. From Montgomery to Nixon's re-election, advocates of different relationships between the white establishment and blacks presented their cases. Each relationship—maintenance of the status quo, exodus, alliance with foreign powers, secession, revolutionary training within the armed forces, and evolution—was written by either Griggs or Corrothers a half century before J.F. Kennedy's first day in office. All of the strategies for accomplishing the desired relationships were based upon the ideal of the American Dream, the unfulfilled promises of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

The difference between Belton Piedmont and Bernard Belgrave, protagonists in *Imperium in Imperio*, or between Jed Blackburn and the dissident blacks in "The Man They Didn't Know" is of the same quality as the difference between Andrew Young and Stokely Carmichael: Some believe the dream can be fulfilled, others do not. All of us make the same decision, if not in words then in actions.

Is there any significance to either Gloster's claim that *Imperium in Imperio* was the "first political novel" by a black American or Payne's deduction that "A Man They Didn't Know" was the first Afro-american fiction to suggest a specific three-part alliance? Significance other than competition or historiography could be shown if either piece had been included in the political education of subsequent black leaders.

That Griggs was well-known to his audience is documented by Payne's research. Griggs's writing style indicates that he also knew his audience well. The style is archaic, with its parable form and moral tone. Was it written in this style because Griggs intended it to be read aloud? Long speeches, parenthetical asides to the reader, and suspense-building by revealing future conclusions only in the most general terms all point to the affirmative.

That Corrothers also knew blacks of his time well—enough to create a plausible story out of black interest in foreign affairs of the nation using white and black archetypes—is no surprise if one also knows he was an accomplished folklorist, as well as a poet. Corrothers's story could easily have been titled "A People They Didn't Know."

Indeed, even now the majority ignores the direction blacks point. That direction is toward the fulfillment of the American Dream. The majority have opted for the selfish fulfillment of their private wants in what is considered a pragmatic approach to governance. The potential that blacks have for determining chaos or order in the nation is illustrated by an analysis of the Presidential election returns of 1980. The majority chose the “privatization” of community interests, excepting war preparedness. Blacks chose orderly progress toward democratic and equitable fulfillment of the American Dream.

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Critique

James Payne’s thoughtful and carefully documented essay stresses the importance of evaluating ethnic American, specifically Afro-american, fiction within its historical context. The historical information he provides in his essay concerning the Afroamerican response to the Spanish-American War and to America’s paranoia of a supposed “Yellow Peril” does indeed shed light on how Griggs and Corrothers each imaginatively re-invested a specific social reality with an Afroamerican revolutionary furor—a rage which ironically had the best interest of the country at heart.

We learn from Payne’s essay that Afroamericans and their terrifying encounters with white violence during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were virtually ignored by the American government—the one segment of the American social structure which could have done something constructive about it. Both Griggs and Corrothers were using fiction to protest this total disregard of the Afroamerican community’s welfare and, above all, the American disregard of the intense devotion and loyalty which most Afroamericans had for the country at that time. As Payne so aptly summarizes in his essay, both *Imperium in Imperio* and “The Man They Didn’t Know” were intended as warnings to their respective white American audiences that the Afroamerican community had the potential to justifiably abandon the United States in favor of an alliance with other peoples of color who had been the victims of Anglo-Saxon violence and aggression.

Social historians and literary critics would do well to follow Payne's example. His essay implies a need for an in-depth historical study of how and why ethnic minorities have consistently demonstrated an intense loyalty to America (in spite of social discrimination) by committing themselves to Uncle Sam during any war. The case of the Navaho Code Talkers and the small band of Japanese Americans who willingly went to war against Japan and Germany during World War II comes to mind here. Payne's essay also prods us to call for more literary studies of ethnic American fiction which centers on the theme of ironic patriotism. How do other creative artists dramatize this theme? Do they, as did Griggs, tone down the real violence (see Payne's discussion of the Frazier B. Baker murder in the above essay), so as to avoid offending their readers or being accused of exaggerating the truth? Are there other ethnic American stories like "A Man They Didn't Know" which show masses of a people who are ready and willing to forgive and forget and to die for America if only she would give a verbal promise of a long overdue Justice?

Those who embark on such a study must keep in mind the need to rescue some of the lesser-known writers and their works from a literary obscurity. Here again Payne's essay sets a fine example. James D. Corrothers was known primarily as a poet during his day, and the artistic flaws of Sutton E. Griggs' novels have often led to their being summarily dismissed from serious classroom study. Payne, however, extracts the ideas behind each prose piece and convincingly reveals them as the strongest element in both works. We already know that Afroamerican novelists can handle characterization, plot, and setting in fiction; Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, and Richard Wright are shining examples of that. We should not hesitate, therefore, to study and re-evaluate the less celestial works in a broader context, such as the historical, so that their redeeming qualities are brought to the forefront.

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Critique

The foregoing essay by James Robert Payne describes two important pieces of Afroamerican literature and places them within their historical context. Payne offers a tantalizing account of those examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century black nationalist writing; he fails, however, to explain their historical

significance in terms of black nationalist thought around the turn of the century.

Black nationalist ideology was as much a reflection of white American society as a reaction to it. As noted by scholars of the subject, territorial separatism and emigration (colonization) were prominent and interrelated themes during the second half of the nineteenth century. [See John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick, *Black Nationalism in America*. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.)] On the other hand, there persisted a basic optimism in American society among some black nationalists. These saw their destiny in a reformed United States rather than in their own black nation-state. Both those ideological streams of black nationalist thought, separatism and reformism, are represented in the selected pieces of fiction, Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* and Corrothers's "A Man They Didn't Know." One was a reflection of white American society in that it shared a belief in the basic rhetoric of equality and in a common heritage, culture, and destiny, while the other was a reaction to white American society which, particularly during the economic hard times of the 1890s, was virulently racist. Violence against blacks, including beatings and lynchings, was commonplace, and fear prevailed in many black communities. [Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.)]

Two influential figures dominated the period, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, with their contrasting tactics for black redemption. Both, nonetheless, reflected a middle-class optimism in American culture, and envisioned a black elite which would win the dignity sought by all Afroamericans. Lesser known, but also influential, contemporaries included among others Henry Adams, Arthur Anderson, T. Thomas Fortune, and Bishop Henry M. Turner. Adams proposed a "territory of our own" while Anderson argued that the United States government should set aside territory for a black nation within its geographic confines for past injustices. Fortune, militant editor of the *New York Age*, founded the Afroamerican League in 1890. At the inaugural convention of the League, Fortune supported agitation, even revolt: "Who would be free," concluded Fortune, "must themselves strike the first blow." Bishop Turner, noted cleric of the African Methodist Episcopal church, probably more than any other person, led the black nationalist movement in the 1890s. Turner foreshadowed nationalists like Garvey and the Nation of Islam in advocating separatism and cultural nationalism. Separatism, resulting in a black state either

in Africa or the American Midwest, was a widespread sentiment among blacks during the 1890s. That was evident in the mass appeal of Turner's call for emigration to Africa, well-publicized all-black town experiments such as Mound Bayou, Mississippi, and proposals to create an all-black state in Oklahoma. [See Redkey, *Black Exodus*; and E. David Cronon. *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955.) Unlike Washington and Du Bois who appealed to the black bourgeoisie, these lesser known black nationalist leaders held the interest of the lower class and farmers who did not share the optimism of the middle class. An elaboration of the foregoing themes sheds further light on the historical significance of the two novels described by Payne.

Finally, an explanation of black attitudes toward Asian Americans, Japan, and the "Yellow Peril" would have added to Payne's discussion on Corrothers's "A Man They Didn't Know." Generally, according to one historian, Afroamericans saw the "Yellow Peril" hysteria and United States government mistreatment of the Japanese in America as simply the same racism which oppressed them. In fact, blacks often held up the Japanese Americans as a model to emulate; Booker T. Washington observed, "The Japanese race is a convincing example of the respect which the world gives to a race that can put brains and commercial activity into the development of the resources of a country." [David J. Hellwig. "Afro-American Reactions to the Japanese and the Anti-Japanese Movement, 1906-1924." *Phylon*. 38:1 (1977) 93-104; Cf., David J. Hellwig, "Black Reactions to Chinese Immigration and the Anti-Chinese Movement: 1850-1910." *Amerasia Journal*. 6:2 (1979) 25-44.] Further, the intervention of the Japanese government on behalf of the Japanese in America in the San Francisco school board affair (1907-1908) was instructive to Afroamericans of how a militarily strong mother country could provide a wedge against racial oppression in the U.S. The appeal to Japan, thus, in Corrothers's "A Man They Didn't Know" had significance beyond the notion of the "Yellow Peril," for a period following the publication of the fictional story, the linking of Afroamericans with Japan for black liberation was a persistent notion. [See Robert A. Hill. *The Black Man*. (New York: 1975)]

Black organizations such as the Negro Alliance and the National Negro Congress were closely monitored by the FBI for possible subversion through an alliance with the Japanese. [Bob Kumamoto. "The Search for Spies: American Counterintelligence and the Japanese American Community, 1931-1942." *Amerasia Journal*. 6:2 (1979) 50-51.] Perhaps of more substance was the "Operation Magic"

deciphers, recently declassified, which identified Taro Terasaki as the “sparamaster chief” in Washington, D.C., who ran the entire Japanese espionage network in the western hemisphere. Terasaki was reported to have received half a million dollars to cultivate informants in the U.S., and to approach “very influential Negro leaders” in the hope of directing racial discontent “to stall the program the U.S. plans for national defense and the economy, as well as for sabotage.” [John Costello. *The Pacific War*. (London: Rawson Wade, 1981) 78, 613.]

Referring to Corrothers’s “A Man They Didn’t Know,” Payne offered sage advice: “like *Imperium in Imperio*, it must, to be fully understood, be read in its historical context.”

—Gary Okihiro
University of Santa Clara

Our Own Dogs

Dawn is like a yellow mist, with grey light
Glinting on snow, flooding across clustered trees,
The frozen river, the slope and rise of hill.
Here, the small village has wrested protection.
Between one cabin and the river bank,
An oil drum with the top cut out
Stands perched on rough stones.
Flames from the wood fire roll against the bottom.
An Athabaskan in corduroy pants,
Army surplus parka, and caribou skin boots
Stands guard like, stirring with a paddle.
The dog boxes spread out in a half circle.
The Huskies sit on their haunches, watching.
The man takes a five gallon can,
Walks with easy steps, throwing one, two
Pieces of dried salmon to each dog.
I saw him once, resting, near the fireplace
Of the combination gas station, motel, and grocery.
His pickup was outside, with supplies.
The owner, from his leather chair, began,
“Well, Charley, how do you think you’ll do, next week?”
The Indian began analyzing the dog race,
The competition, emphasizing no single word.
. . . Yet it was the grandson of the chief
Who told me why Charley finished second.
“That vet come up here three years ago, raced.
He lost bad . . . bought a couple of our dogs.
Next year he did better, bought more dogs.
Last year he bought two lead dogs.
Paid a thousand dollars each.
You don’t see it, but before he starts,
He has two thousand dollars out in front.
When one of us goes to the race,
We take our best, borrow dogs,
Even from another village.
This year the vet came back,
Beat us, with our own dogs.
. . . That night there was a dance at the village hall.
The music started live, with my friends
Playing lead guitar. A fellow from another village sang.

Later, canned music took over:
Singles played on a tiny record player.
I stepped out into the night,
To be alone in the dark, to think.
Next week I would be back on the job,
And carrying my books to classes,
Studying the distant dreams of the European poets,
Listening to the anthropology professor.
. . . Charley was at the oil drum, again,
Stirring the mixture of water and dried feed.
Spruce smoke penetrated the stillness.
The moon, in the dome of heaven,
Was like a brilliant, white melon slice.
Firelight touched Charley's face, the intent eyes.
Many stars brought the sky alive.
The level river ran white, to the bend.
Spruce forests spread off, struck with shadows,
Mounded, rising, growing fainter.

—Robert N. Zimmerman

A Response to “Our Own Dogs”

In contemporary American Indian songs and stories the Iroquois, Shawnee, and Lakota all voice a rueful hindsight over the hereditary “Great Mistake,” or the friendship and kindness which their naive, trusting ancestors extended to the pilgrims on the Mayflower. Thanksgiving Day for many American Indians is a day of bitter mourning. In Robert Zimmerman’s “Our Own Dogs” he effectively blends concise images, accurate characterization, and situational irony into a structurally symmetrical poem whose central idea is a moving variation on this same theme. While far removed geographically from Plymouth Rock, the Athabascans in the poem nonetheless voice a similar bitter resignation not only to the mistake made in selling their dogs to “that Vet,” but also to the guitar, canned music, European poets and an anthropology professor all of which represent the domineering presence of a literate, technological culture with which they must contend.

The yellow/grey dawn, traditional symbol of optimism and new beginnings, is the background against which we meet Charley, the Athabaskan whose work at feeding the huskies is actually an act of guarding an hereditary ritual, one which binds man in a cooperative harmony with animal. This relationship is in marked contrast with the way in which the chief's grandson describes "that Vet" who uses his purchasing power to gradually obtain more and more dogs from the village. Those who sold him the dogs perhaps had a limited knowledge of the power that the vet wanted to wield. Forever encroaching on new territory, forever in search of a new race to win, the vet does not just beat Charley, he puts the entire village in a "second place" because Charley is part of the "we" the chief's grandson describes—those who must at times borrow dogs from neighboring villages to even be able to participate in the race. One can draw an analogy here to the second class position which all American Indians occupy in the larger context of western society—a result of having lost many an economic and political contest with those whom the vet in Zimmerman's poem represents.

In the closing scene Zimmerman returns to Charley at the oil drum who, in spite of his defeat at the race, continues to feed the village dogs. His intense concentration to his evening task is highlighted by a brilliant moon, the firelight and the stars which "brought the sky alive." This would suggest a defiant vitality and a reaffirmation of the relationship between man and animal—a relationship which will persist as a cultural trait regardless of the numerous tragic mistakes American Indians have made in their dealings with the pilgrims and their descendants.

Alice A. Deck
Grinnell College

**“first there is the word
the word is the song”**

Notes

1

north by south, west from east
an invisible but historical line
cuts across the valley's lives
sharp like bloodlines

2

across the street nearly mute
an old woman moans alone
inside the Buckhorn saloon
cowboys drink up and stomp

3

long ago black bears
sang round our lodge fires
tonight they dance
alive through our dreams

4

in chipped and tattered
weavings of a willow basket
the voice of an ancient age
dreaming of breath

5

deep within
a feather in the sky
foam on clear water
Tayko-mol!

—William Oandasan

Reflections

1

the cold mountain water
that quenches the deep thirst
drums my magic fire
drums my medicine pouch

2

the woman with white hair
only whispered *Tatu*
but through my ears
30,000 years echo

3

in a chert arrowhead speckled with quartz
i have seen our grandfathers
along a stream east of the valley
lancing salmon and deer

4

from my mouth a song
for warmth pours and becomes
a red arrow ready
to take me all the way

5

free as the bear
and tall as redwoods
throb my red roots
when spirits ride high

—William Oandasán

Alternative Education for the Rom

Leita Kaldi

The Rom* in the United States are nearly 100% illiterate. There are very few in any of the professions. The Rom cannot rely on *gajo* (non-Gypsy) doctors, lawyers, and educators who do not understand their ways or their unique problems.

The Rom face an agonizing dilemma today. Either they will persist as urban nomads, in mobile ghettos, in enclaves of poverty and in prisons, or their cultural traditions will have to evolve to enable them to share in the benefits of this society, to develop a better material and social existence. Education is a basic bridge into contemporary U.S. society and a pioneering effort has been made in Seattle, Washington, to encourage the Rom to step onto that bridge.

The Gypsy Alternative School was originally the brainchild of Ephraim Stevens, a Rom leader in Seattle. The seed of his idea fell upon fertile imaginations and was nourished by funding apportionments from the state, local school levy money, federal and special state money and the Urban, Rural, Racial and Disadvantaged Education Programme. The school was delivered to the Rom in 1973—two portable classrooms, set up in the schoolyard of Bagley Elementary School, a neat brick building on a quiet residential street in Seattle.

There was an immediate reaction in the Bagley School District when parents learned of the existence of the Gypsy Alternative School. The School was presented as a full-blown fact suddenly, without a period of community gestation beforehand. In addition to the fear engendered by the prejudiced view of the Rom, there was also a feeling of resentment at having school territory impinged upon, fear of the disruptive effect the newcomers might have on the Bagley students. At a hastily called PTA meeting, some facts and truths about the Rom, their needs and aspirations, were explained and doubts were allayed, to some extent, about having the Rom in the community.

The *shavora* (children) are taught in a one-room school setting. Facilities of the Bagley School—gymnasium, lunchroom, library and lavatories—are shared by them. The *shavora* who attend the school vary in age from 3 - 16 years of age. School hours are flexible, from about 9:30 am - 4:00-4:30 pm. The students are taught in groups according to their level of achievement, not their ages. Their attendance varies from five to forty students at any given period. The curriculum emphasizes basic skills, particularly reading. Their academic strengths generally lie in mathematics, since they learn to deal with money at an early age.

The *shavora* are highly motivated, responsible and quick to learn. Their teachers reported them to be affectionate, spontaneous and rewarding. They are excited about having an opportunity to learn. When activities are well planned, they are extremely responsible. They have a strong sense of their own self-worth and have distinctive personalities.

One of the main problems of the Gypsy Alternative School has been the long traditional distrust of *gajo* institutions. Parents are afraid of “losing” their children to *gajo* society. Also, their ability to survive for centuries without benefit of formal education is a source of pride to them and an obstacle to their acceptance of schooling. There is a strong tradition among the Rom to “never aspire to be more than your father was,” according to one Rom leader who can neither read nor write, that prohibits seeking education. Their own illiteracy makes it very difficult for Romany parents to deal with school authorities and paperwork. Their lack of birth certificates (most Rom are delivered at home by midwives who do not register births) makes enrollment problematical.

The relationship between Romany parents and their children is extremely close and protective. Separation anxiety is extreme among the *shavora* of all ages and necessitated at the Gypsy Alternative School the installation of a telephone in the classroom so that the children could call their parents during the day.

Many gymnastic and physical activities common to *gajo* are not allowed by over-protective Romany parents. In spite of deep apprehension, however, basketball has become popular among the *shavora*. In general, they do not own such things as balls, bicycles or toys of any kind.

Romany parents visit the school continuously to discuss all manner of problems with the teachers, and they telephone them at all hours, even on week-ends. Formal Parent-Teacher Association meetings or

note-taking arouse suspicion and discourage cooperation among the parents, so meetings are generally spontaneous, informal and private.

An inevitable problem encountered by the Gypsy Alternative School is that of regular attendance and continuous enrollment. The Rom leave Seattle for a week or more to attend a wedding elsewhere, or a funeral, or simply to travel around the country. The girls often leave in early adolescence to marry. Although enrollment fluctuates, attendance is fairly regular when the pupils are in town.

Free busing was offered to the *shavora* to encourage their attendance but, according to the Area Administrator of Special Projects at the time, "The kids were afraid to ride the bus, even though they were the only children on it." In order to encourage parents to bring the children to school themselves, the transportation cost (about \$1.50 a day) was given directly to the parents. As a result, the parents brought them in their cars and pick-up trucks and were primarily interested in collecting the money. But the money seemed to be spent on the children. They started turning up with new clothes and shoes. Attendance rose markedly. Most encouraging was that after the reimbursement scheme was discontinued a few years later, attendance remained nearly at the same level. The overall-rate of attendance in 1978 was forty-seven percent. "That may be the worst in the city," the Area Administrator observed, "but it is the best ever experienced by the Gypsies."

Another challenge presented by the Romany culture is that of language. Younger children, especially, do not speak English fluently, though after it is learned, they are generally articulate. A Rom teacher's aide and cultural liaison acts as interpreter of Romanes in the classroom.

Other inherent problems are generated by Romany traditions and beliefs, which are different from American ones, based as they are on ancient Hindu customs. Teachers had to learn about *marime* (impurity) concepts that apply to taboo subjects or practices, such as female or sexual matters, and bodily functions. The *shavora* are also reluctant to eat from plates or utensils used by *gaje* and they do not eat certain foods. During periods of mourning, they do not work or play with colors, paints or balls. Beliefs in nature spirits, and spirits of the dead who may do harm to the living survive within the Romany culture.

Contrary to common stereotypes, the Rom abide by a rigid code of morality and cleanliness, based on *marime* observances. Teen-age sexual promiscuity among the Rom is rare and has traditionally been

avoided by early marriages. Bride-prices are paid and the new bride lives with her husband's family. Traditionally, girls marry at about twelve and boys around fifteen years of age.

Access to education, although only elementary at the Gypsy Alternative School, has already changed their views toward early marriage. A striking fact was that two girls of sixteen and seventeen years of age were still unmarried, attending the school and serving as teacher's aides. The school experience had given them a new self-awareness, a broader scope of ambition and a view toward alternative occupational possibilities outside the restricted trades of fortune-telling, furniture crafting, car dealing and related metal working.

The *shavora* singled out *gajo* friends on the basis of their "toughness," attractiveness, maturity and morality. The *shavora* were all shocked when a *gajo* who had been a particular friend was caught smoking marijuana—a practice generally abhorred by them. Significantly, the *shavora* reportedly did not reinforce their parents' prejudices against *gaje* by telling them about the incident.

Raising of health standards is a bonus of the school. With early marriages, teen-age pregnancies are frequent, with their of maternal-child illnesses and fatalities. Babies are delivered by midwives who have little or no training in hygiene or medicine. This is in accordance with *marime* beliefs, which forbid women to seek male gynecologists or obstetricians. It is hoped that future training of midwives in paraprofessional medical centers will become possible. For the time being, at school the *shavora* and their parents are taught about hygiene, health and preventive medicine, though sex education is a sensitive area. Children in the school receive free breakfasts and lunches. They also share in the medical services of Bagley School, where they are vaccinated against common diseases, unlike the majority of *shavora* who do not attend public schools. Initially, parents greatly feared these vaccinations, believing that their children would be infected with the diseases instead of protected against them. But finally, the parents themselves began to request the injections. The children also receive dental, hearing and eye examinations—many for the first time in their lives.

At this point in history, that the Rom have consented to send their children to a school within the *gajo* public school system is an unprecedented breakthrough. However, the idea that the school should serve not as an ultimate end but as a bridge into the larger society, is not yet fully accepted. The exclusive character of the Gypsy Alternative School is an important factor in its success. The cultural liaison and teacher's aide at the school reflected optimism:

This is something worthwhile for the Gypsy community. We want an education for the children. We know you can't get jobs without knowing how to read and write. I'm so proud of my kids. Who knows, in five or ten years, they might go on to high school . . . or even college!

But there is also a feeling of persistent distrust, and ambivalence about entering the larger society, as expressed by a parent:

We want to be part of the community in some ways. This school is our chance. We're starting to think about occupations other than the old ones. But we should still teach our own culture. The kids should learn how to read and write Romany.

The *shavora* remain separate from the regular student population at Bagley—using the lunchroom, gym, library and lavatories at different times. Desegregation rulings are not applied to the school, since it is a special “bilingual program.” The Office of Civil Rights has exempted the school as a unique program that involves relatively few people. The Office is obviously more concerned with the problems of blacks, Asians, Indians and Eskimos, that involve larger populations. Both Rom and *gajo* are grateful for this *modus vivendi*. One *shav*'s mother explained,

Kids used to be scared to go to school. The *gaje* would make fun of us because we couldn't read or write. When you have your own school, though, you don't feel left out.

The most likely aegis for education to *shavora* seems to be such a bilingual program, as it exists in the Seattle Gypsy Alternative School. However, the flexibility that made the Seattle school a success appears to be difficult in other areas of the country. The thrust of national public school programs, such as the Bilingual Program, is integration of non-English speaking children into the school system. To request separate facilities for Rom children would be segregationist and would expose public schools to immediate heavy criticism. In addition, the possibility of establishing a bilingual program for the Rom is generally negated if two primary requisites are enforced: (1) that the *shavora* do not speak English as, for example, children of newly arrived Hispanic parents do not; and (2) that at least twenty children be identified for placement in separate classrooms according to their ages. Once in such a program, the *shavora* would be entitled to a Romany teacher's aide, to assist an ESL teacher. All other classes would be shared with *gaje* children.

These requirements for establishing a bilingual program generally militate against the Rom for the following reasons: (1) The *shavora*,

though; they speak Romanes and may have some difficulties with English, usually speak English too well to qualify; and (2) To separate families into different age groups and place them in different classrooms—or different schools, in the case of age groups 5-10, 11-13 and 14-17—is an unacceptable prospect, given the close protectiveness of Rom brothers and sisters and their fear of *gajo* society. A six-year old expressed this unreasoning dread, nervously waving his small fist and exclaiming, “I’d bring a big stick to school . . . and if anybody picked on me, I’d let ’em have it!”

The fear of ridicule of an older *shav* who enters, say sixth grade and is totally illiterate, makes enrollment at that age nearly unthinkable. A twelve-year old girl, who may soon be married, or a boy of fifteen who already earns his own living and is a street-wise person, would find it degrading, to say the least, to submit to jibes about reading ability. Add to these attitudes parental fear of “abandoning” their children to *gajo* institutions, and you have a cultural barrier that is almost insurmountable.

In the Seattle Gypsy Alternative School, however, the *shavora* are secure in their own school room. The initial fear, mistrust and hostility between *shavora* and *gajo* have given way to a mutual rapprochement. Though physical fights are rare, racial slurs and insults are tossed out from time to time. But the *shavora* have learned to assert themselves in *gajo* circles and even dared to complain to the Principal of Bagley School about such things as having equal gym time. The fact is that peer interaction between *shavora* and *gajo*, in spite of segregated facilities, has developed as an inevitable consequence of the location of the Gypsy Alternative School in the Bagley School yard.

Attempts have been made to set up other alternative schools for Gypsies in cities such as Tacoma and Chicago, but they did not meet with success. The Seattle School’s achievements result from the “loose approach,” the absence of preconceived ideas on the part of the teachers about how the Rom should behave, and the willingness of the teachers to learn from, as well as to teach, the children. The flexibility in funding allocations and in administering those funds in sometimes unorthodox ways that meet unique needs has kept the school going. Patience, also, has been an important element in dealing with the Rom. One teacher smiled wryly when she commented: “They are fascinating people. Exhausting sometimes, but always fascinating! They have nothing . . . so they can demand everything!”

*“Gypsy” in Romanes, the universal Gypsy language, which is based on a Sanskrit dialect, and which has established their origins in northwest India. Romanes is heavily overlaid with words borrowed from other countries of the western hemisphere through which they passed on their migrations during the last 1,000 years.

Critique

“Alternative Education for the Rom” concerns a little written about ethnic group, the Gypsy, and concentrates on the dilemma of cultural resistance on the part of the Rom and cultural change for their survival in the U.S. Leita Kaldi discusses an educational alternative the Rom in Seattle, Washington find acceptable to bridge the gap between traditional Rom culture and the U.S. social structure.

What makes this paper unique and important for ethnic scholars is Kaldi’s view of cultural resistance and change as an ongoing process. The Rom, unlike most ethnic groups residing in the U.S., have refused U.S. institutional, governmental, and social support. Gypsies are attempting to continue their traditional lifestyle in the midst of and in spite of an everchanging social fabric. However, it is apparent from Kaldi’s work that Rom survival as a culturally resistant group is questionable. A solution to this problem, Kaldi believes, is in the educational alternative which is apparently succeeding in Seattle, Washington.

The account of this educational alternative is fascinating as Kaldi points out the push-pull effects of cultural change and cultural resistance for the Rom adults and non-Gypsy teaching staff. New viewpoints and broader perspectives meet with initial skepticism in the Rom community. Rom adults are beginning to think about the long-term advantages of this Seattle elementary school for their children; however, the Rom community insists that Rom traditions and language must continue. Kaldi illustrates that cultural traditions flow between the Rom community and the school as a dual process. The school, non-Gypsy teachers, and Gypsy children are learning Rom traditions as a result of the cultural exchanges. A cultural bridge is formed.

Kaldi's article lays the initial groundwork for further research on the Rom and the inner dynamics of cultural change and cultural maintenance. A longitudinal study of the Rom in Seattle will provide much needed information on Rom culture as well as illustrate how alternatives in education can provide the cultural sensitivity so necessary in contemporary public schools.

Will the Rom continue with public school education? What will happen to the Rom's unique educational alternative if institutional support is curtailed? Are the Rom children benefitting from going to school? Are cultural gaps forming between Rom adults and Rom children? What are the long term effects of cultural changes on the Rom population? What kinds of syncretisms and cultural blends are taking place in the Rom community and in the school? There are many questions as yet unanswered. What occurs in the next ten to twenty years for the Rom in Seattle will be enlightening.

Barbara Hiura
Sacramento, California

Critique

Leita Kaldi's "Alternative Education for the Rom" briefly states the plight of Gypsies in the second paragraph:

The Rom face an agonizing dilemma today. Either they will persist as urban nomads, in mobile ghettos, in enclaves of poverty and in prisons, or their cultural traditions will have to evolve to enable them to share in the benefits of this society, to develop a better material and social existence. Education is a basic bridge into contemporary U.S. society and a pioneering effort has been made in Seattle, Washington, to encourage the Rom to step onto that bridge.

Out of the Seattle project may come much that will help solve one of the toughest modern day problems—teaching not only the Rom but all people to read and write. And out of such probing articles to be found in *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* may come the light at the end of the tunnel for which all educators are searching.

Kaldi's study informs us about the Seattle experiment. And though the account is hardly "All You Ever Wanted To Know About Gypsies," it is considerably more than this reader ever knew about these amazing modern nomads who, generally speaking, travel far and wide with minimal English language skills.

In her only note for the work, Kaldi mentions Gypsies' "last 1,000 years" migrations. This may be the only shortcoming in the report. I recall legends placing Gypsies at the crucifixion. The point I raise may, in turn, reflect on the ignorance of this layman. Unfortunately, much of what laymen know about these nomads has been culled from folktales and sensational news stories. Information such as that contained in Kaldi's article is necessary to correct the myths surrounding these people. Her account of the Seattle project goes far in setting the record straight and shows us how these heretofore "rootless" people are beginning to see their aspirations and dreams become entangled in America's upward mobility steeplechase.

Jesse Jackson
Appalachian State University

Critique

Leita Kaldi has introduced the readers to little known data on one of America's most interesting and lesser-known ethnic groups. This critique focuses on further development of the material in the article and the implications of such research for the field of ethnic studies.

Because Kaldi presents a model of an alternative school that has met with some measures of success, it would be beneficial to examine in further detail those elements which contribute to the continuation of the Gypsy Alternative School. Of particular importance is the need to specify and clarify what factors in particular make this model successful when compared to factors operative in unsuccessful alternative schools for the Rom.

Although such factors are mentioned in a general way, in-depth explanations, regarding flexibility of funding allocations, characteristics of teachers, curriculum descriptions, and data on student learning styles would provide substantial information.

A second area for development would be a biographical sketch of the school's founder, Ephraim Stevens. Such data would probably prove invaluable in providing inspiration to others interested in departing from traditional approaches to non-traditional problems.

The implications of Kaldi's research for the field of ethnic studies is somewhat related to areas for further development. The interdisciplinary nature of the problem could be studied in terms of the aspects of each *discipline* that contributed toward a solution. Aspects of history, geography, political science, economics, sociology, philosophy, and education combined would make a good blend—a workable solution to a long-standing problem. The task for researchers, then, would be to explore the various disciplines involved and to “tease out” those factors that contributed toward making the endeavor a successful one. Such a determination could be utilized to make this model applicable to similar educational situations.

Shirla R. McClain
Kent State University

The Editor Notes . . .

This issue of the journal is dedicated to each NAIES member, for you have made it possible with your membership dues. After a lengthy delay, our publications are back on schedule. Sigler Printing of Ames, Iowa, has closed our printing-schedule gap and enhanced the quality of our presentation in both *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* and *Explorations in Sights and Sounds*.

This issue of *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* is unique in another respect: with Volume 6 we are completely self-supporting. We have enjoyed the institutional support of the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona, and Iowa State University during the past years, support which enabled us to build our membership and increase the number of library subscriptions. Because we are now self-supporting, we must maintain our present membership and continue to increase the number of library subscriptions. I urge each and every one of you to help ensure our survival by checking with the library at your institution and encouraging them to subscribe if they are not already receiving our publications.

Volume 6 contains two essays which explore heretofore little-known aspects of ethnicity. James R. Payne discusses two pieces of literature which could have remained obscure were it not for the increasing interest of scholars in writings of black Americans. Leita Kaldi discusses in her essay the Rom, better-known as Gypsies, a group of people who have been stereotyped and misrepresented in both serious and popular literature. The accommodation of a school system to meet their needs and yet allow for their individual and collective identities demonstrates the possibilities available within the system.

We are at work on the July issue, and now that we are back on schedule, I want to encourage you to submit papers to be considered for publication. If you would like to write a critique for an essay in *Explorations in Ethnic Studies*, let me know. We welcome your ideas, and we value your continuing support.

—Charles C. Irby

Contributors

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JESSE JACKSON is in the Department of Elementary Education at Appalachia State University.

LEITA KALDI is a former employee of UNESCO and the United Nations. Her study outlined in this article is a part of a longer study sponsored by UNICEF during the International Year of the Child (1979).

SHIRLA McCLAIN served as a member of the NAIES Executive Council and teaches at Kent State University.

WILLIAM OANDASAN is editor of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* as well as *A*, a journal of contemporary literature. He is a widely-published poet; most recently *A Branch of California Redwood* was published by the American Indian Studies Center at UCLA.

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