

reveal that writers were generally more sympathetic towards minorities than were their fellow citizens. Nevertheless, these men and women were often overly zealous in their humanitarianism such that some, such as James Fenimore Cooper and Lydia Maria Child, nearly idolized Native Americans and Afroamericans as “noble savages.” Walt Whitman, as another example, incorporated contradictory attitudes towards minorities in his poetry because he saw himself as “containing multitudes.” He claimed every American of every ethnic background as his equal, but his tone of voice often seemed patronizing and overbearing. Butcher argues in his Prefaces to these volumes that modern readers must “deal with the selections in the context of the time of publications . . . and to appreciate the authors’ accomplishments rather than to disparage their work for flaws more easily detected from our perspective than from theirs.” One could counter this by saying that a modern detection of flaws in these texts helps us to better understand the complex attraction to and repulsion from minorities which constitutes the history of race relations in America.

Butcher’s collection is unique and much needed. Each student can and should use it to develop a succinct picture of America’s evolving attitude towards its minority citizens. These selections should be used to supplement the standard texts in American collegiate courses on American literature, history, and culture.

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Pastora San Juan Cafferty and William C. McCready, *Hispanics in the United States: A New Social Agenda*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985) vi, 257 pp., \$29.95; \$12.95 paper.

The editors of this book, associate professors at the University of Chicago, state that their work seeks to promote understanding of and raise questions about Hispanic social issues in the hope that a “collective social agenda” can result.

Hispanics in the United States is one of the few books available which examines the public policy issues associated with the social problems faced by Hispanics. The editors have selected significant issues: immigration, assimilation, socioeconomic mobility, and the reactions of law enforcement and social service agencies, although they fail to explain what theme or other feature the collected articles have in

common. Moreover, because advanced theoretical and statistical concepts are examined in many of the articles, readers are more likely to comprehend the complex arguments presented only if they have had training in ethnic studies and social science, particularly sociology.

The book has two major deficiencies. The first and most important one is methodological. Despite recognizing that diversity exists in the Hispanic community, the editors and authors largely ignore the most essential type of diversity, that involving national origin. The Hispanic population is made up of Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans, and other Spanish-speaking communities. At a minimum, an article should have been presented at the outset of the book succinctly examining the history of each group and comparing their demographic and, particularly, socioeconomic characteristics. Social science and educational research (interestingly enough, some of it conducted by an author of one of the articles in the book) has demonstrated that there are crucial differences among the Hispanic populations which should prevent investigators from studying them as an aggregate. It would have been helpful if the authors had acknowledged that their data were heavily weighted towards the Mexican-American community, which comprises over 60% of the Hispanic population. More realistically, each article should have made inter-group comparisons with regard to the issues addressed. Without these clarifications, the term "Hispanic community" is a meaningless category ignoring the diversity that actually exists and loading the analytical deck in favor of one group.

The editors have committed yet another serious error, specifically in the articles they authored, when they argue that with only minor exceptions the overall Hispanic assimilation process has been and continues to be similar to that of European immigrants and that the full integration of Hispanics is imminent. This position not only reflects the editors' lack of information but also yields the most unfortunate misimpression that little effort is necessary to help Hispanics because their total assimilation is forthcoming. Let us hope that these articles do not make their way to policy makers.

Despite their methodologically questionable approaches, the remaining authors exhibit real concern about the problems faced by Hispanics. Although their articles are worth reading, it is imperative that the book not be used in ethnic studies classes unless the aforementioned serious deficiencies are first carefully discussed.

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