

## **Abstracts from the Twelfth Annual Conference on Ethnic and Minority Studies “Ethnicity: 1984 and Beyond”**

In an attempt to record a sense of the formal sessions of the 1984 Conference, we asked the Chairs to assemble abstracts and discussant comments for their sessions. Although we are pleased with a response greater than in 1983, we are aiming for one hundred percent in 1985.

### **SESSION I: COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE**

Chair: Tony Cortese, Colorado State University

Linda M.C. Abbott, California School of Professional Psychology, Fresno.  
**Planned Social Change: The Case of the Fresno Organizing Project**

Models for intentional social change are examined within perspectives offered by contemporary theory. Community organizations with fundamentally political objectives are presented as examples of the alliance base focus and of the strategy focus. Of the latter, an Alinsky-style organization, The Fresno Organizing Project is reviewed as a case example, with attention to its history, objectives, and progress toward declared goals. The Project is evaluated, both with respect to its fit with the model and with regard to its impact on the target area.

Mic Denfeld and Coke Gross, Iowa State University. **“People-pertising” with Four Arizona Tribes**

In 1980, a Presidential Commission visited several tribal communities in Arizona and discovered juveniles being housed in adult jails—a clear violation of Federal law. The Commission established alternatives to jail placement within each community. The University of Illinois/Champaign-Urbana’s Community Research Center (CRC) administered the OJJDP funds and provided technical assistance for developing the JRI at four sites in cooperation with the Arizona Department of Corrections.

This paper describes the projects from the view of a technical advisor hired by CRC and a volunteer trainer. It describes the use of “people-pertising” rather than “expertising” in their work with the tribal communities and the reciprocal rewards of this perspective as it was experienced during their on-site visits.

Discussant: R. Dennis Stewart, Farmtrek, Sacramento, CA

Father Keith Kenny, who died shortly before this conference, was a Catholic priest who worked from a Sacramento, California, pulpit. He was a civic leader and confidant of Caesar Chavez, but more than anything else he was an exemplary community organizer. A member of one of the western world’s oldest “establishment” institutions he was, nonetheless, a champion, leader, and servant of all the people in his community. His definition of “the people” included those who would contribute to

the spiritual, political, social, and economic well-being of "the community." He acted in a community that comprised not just his own, mainly poor and ethnically non-white parish, but all of Sacramento, extended often to other parts of California and the Southwest, and occasionally encompassed the nation. His voice was heard and his work known in Hispanic America and Europe. Like the results of each of the endeavors summarized in the papers that follow, Father Kenny left numerous "agents in place" to continue "the people's" work. These fortunate individuals, some of whom are now within "the establishment," work toward the twin goals of liberty and empowerment for themselves and for those without either. Father Kenny's special achievement was to convince those with both that there was enough for all.

\* \* \* \* \*

The papers demonstrate the topical richness that is illustrative of the discipline of ethnic studies. By using the framework of theoretical community organization (see Abbott's paper for an excellent summary), three very different situations involving change in and around ethnic and minority-group peoples become accessible. Lest the reader be alarmed, all the papers contain phenomena that do not lend themselves to one, or even any, analytical tool.

"'People-pertising' With Four Arizona Tribes" is essentially a report on a specific project that went far beyond the granting agency's limited objective. The objective was more than adequately satisfied and in the process people began to take charge of their own destiny; the paper contains touching testimonials by organizers and a beautiful story of a mythic change agent that spells out the essence of community organization.

"Planned Social Change: The Case of the Fresno Organizing Project" is a comprehensive piece that could easily be used as part of a grant proposal to a progressive funding agency. It describes a perfectly designed and executed community organization ready to "take-off" and radically change the substance and structure of tens of thousands of lives in a regional metropolitan center.

"The LCO (Lac Courte Orielle Reservation, Wisconsin) Schools", not presented at the Conference, is a case study of a local collection of people who responded to an emergency and became a community.

In keeping with the theme of the conference, each paper considered the status of concern and each gives a guarded, yet hopeful scenario or specific plans for the future. As if in concert, each paper describes or defines its meaning of the session's two topics, "community" and "people."

Although each paper differs in style, each situation described differs in its origins and the relationships of the authors to the endeavor differ, they have much in common.

Each:

- "community" ends locally and with a closely analogous situation elsewhere;
- describes "the people" in an inimical relationship with those outside the group, i.e., "flatlanders," "white world," or "the establishment";
- relates a technical service component run by experts (change agents or organizers);
- describes the process in which the organizers respond in a democratically-oriented atmosphere to the agenda of "the people" in "the community" no matter if the agents are hired, self-appointed, or self-made;
- deals with a specific geographical area;
- describes how the endeavor broadens to include more than one technical component even if designed and funded to service only one narrow objective;
- describes a number of unforeseen effects emanating from the original design or from expert responsiveness to the redefinition of mission;
- relates success in terms of an agency, "the people," and "the community";
- gives recommendations for future action; and
- documents positive change for individuals, in the social milieu or of the political atmosphere within the target population.

Only the Fresno project appears to be having an effect on the enveloping majority population. There, some of the target population has only a class difference from the

majority. Ethnic and cultural differences between the client population and the majority population prevent bridge-building between the two in the other projects and will make further problem resolution difficult in the Fresno case.

In "The LCO Schools" story an additional effect on the political system is seen. There, government agencies compete with each other to provide funds to the community, but only for the purpose of fulfilling each agency's own institutional objectives. A clear case of all benefitting. However, in the case of the four Arizona tribes, fulfilling the very narrow objective of the funder has not led to continued support. Multiple objectives may assure continued support.

One obvious avenue of further research are follow-up reports on each of these communities and peoples. *An unconventional but valuable arena would be additional notes on the subsequent activities of the organizers in their professional lives.*

A more general question that does not often find expression outside newspaper stories is, Who describes the failures of like projects from an ethnic studies perspective? Also, are there failures in establishment terms that are really successes in terms of "the people"? Are "the people" better off in some instances by rebuffing assistance?

Finally, without the ethnic studies forum provided by the Conference, it is highly unlikely that these complementary studies would ever have been made accessible in one place. We are all the richer for them.

## SESSION II: COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONS

**Chair: Lynn Hamlin, University of Cincinnati**

**Reva H. Bell, Texas Christian University. An Agenda for Getting "There from Here"**

The purpose of the paper is to present a plan of action beginning with the past of each area to be discussed as it affects the future of minorities in America. The areas under consideration are the community and its basic social institutions: family, school along with political participation, and the accompanying economic benefits. Historical background, present status, and recommendations for the future delineated.

Handouts distributed to participants.

**Theresa McCormick, Emporia State University, KS. No One Model American Family: A Necessary Understanding for Effective Multicultural Education in Public Schools**

A reexamination of the American family, its diverse forms and changing nature and the implications of these phenomena for multi-cultural education is the focus of this paper. Characteristics of ethnically and culturally diverse children and their families are explored. Understanding diverse family models should enable teachers to provide education that is more responsive to the needs of *all* students. While a multicultural view of society, education, and families has not fully taken root, the concept has provided educators with a framework in which to advocate program change that is not based on a deficit model of children and their families.

**Walter A. Sedelow, Jr., University of Kansas. Being Precise—and Scientific?—About Ethnicity**

Ethnicity, behaviorally and communications-theoretically/information-theoretically viewed, can be understood as a learned code—or, more precisely, as a set of learned codes (e.g., dialectal speech habits; patterns of dress; music; as with, say, styles of polkas; and so forth), among which higher order mappings sometimes are built. If one takes a *formalist* view of code—formalist in the computer sciences sense, as in Formal Language Theory—in which if research is thoroughly scientific it is realizable (in principle at least) in fully algorithmic form and implementable in a computer-based information system, in that case there is no doubt that the study of ethnic behavior as codes is a thoroughly scientific enterprise.

Foster Brown and Robert Warshawsky, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. **Ethnic-sensitive Counseling**

Wynetta Devore and Elfride Schlesinger's (1981) model of ethnic-sensitive practice was utilized to research the history, ethnic reality, and health belief systems of Asian Americans. With this as a background, communication theory was used to analyze the practice of counseling with the intent of systematically adapting intervening procedures in such a manner as to make effective use of the knowledge about class and ethnic related behaviors so as to more effectively serve the health needs of Asian Americans.

Discussant: David M. Gradwohl, Iowa State University

The papers are appropriate to the interdisciplinary matrix of NAIES. The participants offered perspectives from a variety of disciplines: elementary education, art and multicultural education, sociology and computer science, and social work. For the purposes of efficiency in this summary discussion, the presentations can also be compared and contrasted according to their (a) principal focus—applied or theoretical, (b) institutional aspect, (c) group dealt with, and (d) emphasis on diachronic/historical or synchronic/contemporary factors.

Bell's approach is essentially applied; takes up the family, schools, and political system as institutions; focuses on blacks; and is diachronic in weaving historical factors into present realities ("here") and suggesting paths to desired goals in the future ("there"). McCormick's focus is also applied and deals with the family and public schools as institutions; her subjects are multiethnic and her emphasis is synchronic but draws upon historical traditions in utilizing art as a medium to convey value systems of families from various cultural heritages.

Sedelow holds up a theoretical framework and, by way of statistics and taxonomic modeling, looks at the nature of ethnicity *per se* as expressed in linguistic phenomena; language, of course, is a diachronic/traditional mode of cultural transmission but it is also a code for present "realities." Brown and Warshawsky, in an instructive and inviting "Huntley-Brinkley style," deal with their project which is specifically applied to recent Asian American immigrants in the area of medical and health care institutions. Drawing upon the theory of their own disciplines and upon the traditional religious and family values of their Asian American clients, Brown and Warshawsky are in a position to help individuals see themselves at the interface of two cultural systems and, in a context of rapid changes in lifestyles, look for courses of action which will accommodate their traditional values in the new roles expected of or thrust upon them in the United States.

A topic of mutual concern to Bell and McCormick is that our schools too often look at children of various ethnic and minority groups as "different." Teachers with their often-unilineal and monocultural lesson plans are frequently frustrated that their charges, coming from various religious and linguistic backgrounds and out of alternative family styles, do not react in a single and "efficient" manner. Too often these children are viewed as having deficiencies rather than as the carriers of knowledge (might one even say **proficiencies**?) of their own cultural heritages.

Some years ago, in studying the formal educational system at the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, Rosalie and Murray Wax also observed this phenomenon which they called the "vacuum ideology." Obviously no humans operate in a vacuum, and it serves neither the family, the community, or other institutions to operate in any way on the basis of that mythical perception vis-a-vis people who are "different." These definitions and possible courses of action, of course, must first be understood by individuals and by groups of individuals within the on-going social system. They are inner and often emotional matters; but perhaps, as suggested by Sedelow, this process can be facilitated by the computer analysis of the linguistic labels codifying those self-perceptions. Papers in this session, then, stimulated some thoughts on defining ethnicity, looking at concepts of *self* and *other*, and getting on with the business of attaining our goal of a multicultural and multiethnic society in the United States.

### SESSION III: PROSPECTS

Chair: Marilyn Meisenheimer, University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse

#### Norman L. Friedman, California State University, Los Angeles. **The Future of Ethnic Cultural Pluralism in America: Two School-based Models and Scenarios**

Currently, most minority groups in America seem to want to maintain some amount of "cultural pluralism," while also being extensively culturally and socially integrated into the mainstream. Cultural pluralism is popular as a philosophy and practice. Will it continue into the future, and if so, in what forms?

This paper suggests two major current school-based maintenance models of ethnic cultural pluralism, and analyzes their relative strengths and weaknesses. The first, here called the "public-secular-ethnic" model, is illustrated by the case of Chicanos and their publicly supported bilingual/bicultural secular educational programs. The second, here called the "private-religio-ethnic" model, is illustrated by the case of American Jews and their privately sponsored after school, Sunday School, and all-day school programs of religio-ethnic instruction. The two prototypical models, and their possible future scenarios, are compared and discussed.

#### David Muga, Seattle. **The Future of Ethnicity: 1984 and Beyond**

Using response to systemic crisis as a common starting point for both G. Orwell's 1984 social relations and the present reality of the ethnic experience in the U.S., a limited exploration is made of the relation of State policies and private interests to the stigmatization of ethnicity. The areas explored include racism, immigration/migration patterns, and the process of proletarianization. The principle argument is that general systemic crisis locates certain groups of people in relation to State policies and private interests in a way which stigmatizes dramatically what it is to experience ethnically. These locations are seen to be decisive for future strategies for social change.

#### Discussant: Zdenka Gredel-Manuel, Niagra University

There is no easy solution to problems created in American society by ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism, nor can one envision a simplistic glimpse into the future of ethnicity in 1984 and beyond. Presenters Friedman and Muga have attempted to present us with some prospects which may develop.

Friedman addresses himself to two school based models and scenarios, the Jews and the Chicanos. He presents some sociological insights into the development as he calls the "private-religio-ethnic" model of Jews and the "public-secular-ethnic" model of Chicanos. The futuristic assumptions of Professor Friedman are that the Chicano model may take to some extent the route of the Jewish model.

Muga's paper utilizes the "ethnic conflict theory" to explain what is in store for the future of ethnicity. He assumes that competition and conflict increase among ethnic groups in the process of societal modernization, thus creating the conditions for ethnic struggle and exploitation rather than assimilation. From this perspective all history is a process of struggle, oppression, and more struggle.

Muga attempts to translate orthodox Marxism into ethnic conflict theory and maintains that ethnic groups, specifically blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians, will struggle for wealth, power and privilege in modern American society.

Muga seems to believe that the root of all evil is capitalism. Eliminate capitalism and you would eliminate racism, prejudice, and all the evils of deprivation and discrimination. I would like to raise the following issues:

1. racism existed before the rise of capitalism, and
2. it exists today in non-capitalist societies, such as in the USSR and China.

Therefore, I suggest that the elimination of capitalism would not solve the problems. The question we need to focus on is powerlessness. A good understanding of "powerlessness" gives us an opportunity to develop power among ourselves to get what is justly ours.

## SESSION IV: MEDIA OR EDUCATION

Chair and Respondent: Meredith Reinhart, California State University, Sacramento

### Vagn K. Hansen and C.J. White, Delta State University, MS. **Television News and Third World Immigrants in the U.S.**

Analysis of television network news broadcasts, January 1981 - December 1983, reveals considerable disparity in both the quality of coverage related to Third World immigrants in the United States and the content of the coverage. There was a decline in each of the three years in the amount of coverage, with CBS consistently devoting more attention to the changing ethnic composition of American society than the other networks. Virtually all coverage of immigration has been focused on Southeast Asians and Latin Americans. With the exception of a few segments devoted to the successes of high school or college valedictorians, coverage has generally emphasized the negative aspects of immigration. The cumulative effect of such reporting may be to develop the idea that immigration is a serious social problem. The concept of American society as multicultural has been virtually ignored.

### Jacqueline Zbracki, Ames, Iowa. **An Alternative ESL Program**

*An Alternative ESL* (English as a Second Language) *Program* illustrates how infants and preschool age children from Indochina learn English by using a total language learning concept. What was once a babysitting service for Indochinese adults (displaced persons) who are taking ESL classes is transformed into an active, dynamic learning center for children.

A requirement of this ESL training program is that parents teach their native language and culture to their children at home, creating both a positive cultural language environment and reinforcing bilingualism.

#### Response:

Media is a powerful communicator. The media which confronts us when we turn on television news and the media we view in the classroom are separate faces of the same creature. In whatever form media confronts us, they have the potential to challenge viewers to think or lull us into accepting whatever image is presented on the screen. The two presentations show that even beyond practicing awareness in our daily lives, we must require a critical response from throughout the academy.

Hansen and White's "Television News and Third World Immigrants in the United States" alerts us to the danger of passively accepting the news as the truth. Hansen and White's collection of news footage concerned with immigration clearly demonstrates the power of television news images. Distortions are rampant in the footage. Third World immigrants, when covered, were presented as problems. Mexicans were viewed as illegal immigrants; the real diversity of immigrants was ignored. Chinese, Korean, Indian, Filipino, Jamaican and Dominican immigrants got little attention even when they were the numerical majority of immigrants. News also focused on the failure of immigration policies and the difficulties presented by immigrants with different cultural backgrounds.

Zbracki's videotape, **An Alternative ESL Program**, was presented by Barbara Hiura and Ernie Pon. The videotape demonstrated a positive use of media. Both *An Alternative ESL Program* and the presenters' comments focused on the positive nature of bilingual education in a multicultural society. The children were not viewed as problems, and bilingual ability was presented as a positive goal. Zbracki's tape can challenge future teachers and others about the worth and practicality of exemplary ESL programs.

## SESSION V: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Chair: Helen McLam, Choice Magazine

Margaret A. Laughlin, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. **Women and Education: A West Indies Perspective**

The under-education of women is of serious concern to many nations as women remain under-represented at all levels of education. Levels of educational achievement of women is a key indicator of a nation's progress and development. Educational opportunities for women in the former British West Indies have been limited by historical circumstance, cultural expectations, and limited economic support. The paper provides an overview of educational experiences of West Indian women and examines changing policy planning decisions related to women's educational opportunities related to quality, quantity, and content.

P. Rudy Mattai, Lane College, TN. **Majority Population with Minority Political Status**

The entrance into and continued presence of East Indians in the co-operative Republic of Guyana present scholars concerned with the study of immigrant groups with several similarities to other immigrant groups and, *pari passu*, with even more significant peculiarities or phenomenological differences. This presentation is not concerned with the similarities but rather with those differences which exhibit an interesting departure from theory, particularly that set of theory which relates to the organization of multicultural or multiethnic societies.

Despite the East Indian's numerical majority in the Guyanese population and overwhelming numerical strength in the economic sector, they have not been able to wield comparable political power. Instead, the predominantly African government has been able to assert some degree of political hegemony in the society at the expense of large-scale discrimination. This presentation discusses the genesis and implications of that situation.

Daiva K. Stasiulis, Carleton University, Ottawa. **Racism and the Canadian State: The Subway to 1984**

The racial hostility and discrimination faced by visible minority groups in Toronto during the 1970s led to their mobilization into a multi-pronged movement against racism. This paper examines the responses by a variety of key institutions within the Canadian state to grass-roots pressures for reform and the threat of racial conflict. As the prosperous early seventies developed into the crisis-ridden eighties, a shift occurred in state response to visible minority group interests from "incorporation" to "exclusion." In light of this trend, this paper proposes the need for a reconceptualization of the relationship among the liberal democratic state, racism, and excluded minority groups.

## SESSION VII: POLITICAL VIABILITY

Chair: Minnie Thomas Bailey, Grambling State University, LA.

George Estes, Spearfish, SD. **The People, the Land, the Law**

There is a body of United States law setting American Indians apart from other Americans. American Indian law is a unique trust relationship between the tribes and the United States. This trust relationship is based upon negotiated treaties in which the U.S. agreed to provide various forms of protection and services in exchange for land. The reservation land base poses special legal questions concerning jurisdiction, taxes, water, and mineral rights. American Indian people are beginning to take legal offensive to protect long-ignored treaty rights. Self-government is essential to restoring self-respect and making American Indians useful citizens after years of

crippling dependence upon the federal government. In the future, tribes will remain dependent upon the federal trust relationship yet must also emerge as self-governing if they are to survive beyond the 1980s.

### **Eugene Kim, California State University, Sacramento. Korean Americans in the United States: Problems and Alternatives**

This paper identifies and analyzes problems and difficulties Korean Americans in the U.S. have experienced in the categories as follow:

1. The slow acculturation process ("Adhesive Adaptation")
2. The language deficiency in English ("The Language Shock")
3. Declining occupational ladder (A Downward Syndrome)
4. The splitting of family relationships (Breakdown of Family "Roots")
5. The Korean language maintenance (Unilateral Heritage Theory)
6. Bilingual education (non-functional "Mainstreaming")

Based on the problems/difficulties identified, this paper further conceives and proposes possible approaches and remedies to alleviate the problems. The author emphasizes that the adjustment of the "life styles" and the manifestations of their "life changes" will be greatly enhanced by the effort and the commitment of those to improve their images by the eradication of cultural ambivalence and self-imposed social rejection.

### **Bette Novit Evans, Creighton University. Conflicting Models of Minority Group Membership in American Public Policy**

This paper explores two apparently conflicting models which underlie American policy with respect to minorities. The first model comprehends society as an aggregate of individuals, whose ethnic characteristics are essentially irrelevant to public policy choices, and who, as individuals, are bearers of rights and responsibilities. The second model views society as consisting of groups of an almost corporate nature, and perceives individual rights and responsibilities as deriving, at least in part, from group membership. Most of the major policy statements regarding discrimination are phrased in terms of the first model, but the administrative and judicial guidelines by which they are implemented tend to be phrased in terms of the second. In this paper I survey major policy developments in the areas of school desegregation, voting rights, and employment discrimination in order to show evolution from the first to the second models over time, and the continuity of themes across policy areas. I argue that the apparent contradiction is in fact resolved by viewing the second model as a logical outgrowth of the first—a necessary and logically consistent method of realizing individual rights in a world of limited resources and imperfect knowledge.

### **Sally Yeates Sedelow, University of Kansas. Computational Linguistics and Ethnic Genres**

Ethnic genres, like other genres, are presumably characterizable as genres because they comprise distinguishing and identifiable patterns. Any student of genres knows that getting at "the patterns formed in the linguistic encoding of information" (Sedelow and Sedelow, "A Preface to Computational Stylistics," in Leed, ed. *The Computer and Literary Style*, Kent State, 1966) is a non-trivial task. In fact, the computer seems the single best hope for managing both the quantities of data and pattern detection within that data implied by genre study. This paper discusses some of the current problems and possibilities associated with the application of computational linguistics to the study of ethnic genres.

### **Discussant: C. Lok Chua, Moorhead State University, MN.**

These four papers have proceeded from several different disciplines—education, sociology, political science, and linguistics. I shall complicate matters further by discussing these papers with yet another discipline in the background, my own of literature. For, as I go along, I shall mention titles and authors of literary works which dramatize or speak to some of the issues raised by these papers and which may profitably be read as supplements to this discussion.

Professor Evans' paper is solidly central to our section's topic of "Political Viability." Her closely reasoned and densely documented argument shows us convincingly that the antidiscriminatory ideals of policy aimed at supporting *individual* rights must realistically and cost-effectively find expression in measures that affect the group and



the *aggregate*. She draws her examples from the spheres of education, voting rights, and employment. She reminds us that the *intention* to discriminate is not measurable, but the *effect* of discrimination is; further, Evans makes clear that an effect is usually measurable in *aggregate* terms (i.e., in terms of so many minority children attending this school rather than that school), and that, therefore, the corrective measures have to take the form of *aggregate* remedies. The unfortunate aspect of aggregate remedies is that they can be made to look very much like reverse discrimination. How, then, do we as individuals and as groups deal with this misperception in our school boards, our precinct caucuses, our hiring committees?

Professor Kim is dealing with the fourth largest Asian minority, and he analyzes the *causes* for their problems in assimilation, suggests *remedies*, and draws *analogies* between the Korean American and the Asian American experience.

To summarize his major points, the first problem is slow acculturation or adhesive adaptation. Its causes are the stigma of racial and national origins, the difficulties of language, the consequent isolation in insular communities. The remedy is to heighten ethnic pride and self esteem.

Language itself is a second problem, a "catch 22." Immigrants must immerse themselves in the majority society, but this immersion is difficult or impossible without English which is the currency of social exchange and which is best acquired by immersion itself in the society. Remedy: aggressive language acquisition.

The third problem is the immigrant's slide down the occupational scale in the host country. The cause is the lack of language skills and the invalidation of former professional accreditation. Remedy: pre-immigration preparation and continuing education after arrival in the host country.

The fourth problem concerns family structure. Korean immigrants bring an orderly Confucian patriarchy into confrontation with an American anarchist cult of youth; they bring hierarchic masculine authority into confrontation with a fluid American androgyny. Remedy: the elders must adapt to the new cultural and social milieu, permit the children to live away from the ancestral home, become more enlightened towards their children's sexual mores. At the same time, the Korean heritage should be upheld by a bilingual and bicultural education for the younger generation.

The remedies suggested by Professor Kim, if they can be realized, should make for a smoother "mainstreaming" of Korean Americans. Kim makes some analogies between the Korean American and the general Asian American experience. If I may be indulged, I would like to add a few from my literary point of view. For instance, Maxine Hong Kingston's autobiographical works *Woman Warrior* and *China Men* graphically illustrate the linguistic disadvantages of Asian emigres and their consequent downward occupational slide. Maxine's father was a Mandarin and a teacher while her mother was a shamanistic midwife-physician in China. But when they immigrated to America, they had to settle for work in a laundry because their professional qualifications were not recognized and they lacked the requisite language skills. Similarly, the tensions of a Confucian family in American society are depicted in Lin Yutang's novel *Chinatown Family* where the Confucian ethic is challenged by the second son's American success ethic; fortunately, the challenge is resolved by the example of the youngest son who becomes an engineer but marries a girl epitomizing the best of the traditional from China.

Estes tells us about the legal rights of American Indians vis-à-vis the lands their tribes own. These lands are significantly extensive—larger than New England—and their natural resources important—54% of the U.S.'s projected needs.

By and large, tribal governments, which are regarded as "dependent nations" within the borders of the U.S., have jurisdiction over these land areas. These tribal governments have become increasingly insistent on self determination; and, indeed, Estes foresees a time when the reservations will become self-governing entities dependent upon the federal government but not subject to the states. This relationship will provide Indians with wealth, land, education, and technical assistance which will in turn enable them to become "self-respecting and useful American citizens."

This note, on which Estes closes, is in a way optimistic. There are those who would be more pessimistic. An American Indian novel, N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* comes to mind. In this novel, Abel, an Indian of the Southwest, is first shown to be a well integrated youth with deep cultural roots in his reservation and his tribal

ways of life. But the white man's society conscripts him to kill in war and a white woman recruits him to enhance her sexuality while white justice condemns his act of ritual sacrifice as an act of homicide. Momaday would seem to be very pessimistic that the Abel's of our times can become "self-respecting and useful American citizens."

And yet one has only to look at Momaday himself—a Stanford graduate, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and University of Arizona professor—to see a living example of Estes's best hopes.

After listening to Sally Sedelow's paper on computational linguistics, I feel a little like how my daughters must feel when I bring a new cartridge for their Atari, be it a Ms. Pacman, or a Space Invader, or an Enduro. I can hardly wait to obtain Sedelow's MAPTEXT and CGAMS programs and let them loose on the terrain of N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. But perhaps before I do, I should ask what the object of the game is. Is it a Pacman—like exorcising of ghosts from our ethnic collective consciousness? Is it to learn how to make a better living space among the missile silos of a deteriorating environment? Or is it to teach minority youngsters how to negotiate the dangerous Enduro curves that life will lead them into?

I am also fascinated by the inner workings of Sedelow's software. It promises "a description of normative language or what is characteristic of the ethnic group," a description arrived at through the praxis of translation theory and the analytics of the Prague school of linguistics. I am intrigued by what this will do for poems written in Spanglish, how it will react to the pidgin syntax of Milton Murayama's novella *All I Asking For is My Body*, and how it will analyze the punch line of Jeffrey Paul Chan's "Jack Rabbit" which is a Cantonese sentence that culminates a story written in standard American English.

The common denominator of our papers seems to be the posing of a question from a distinctively ethnic point of view: how may a minority American, whether immigrant or native, participate fully and equally in the opportunities and possibilities of American life, be it in education, in political consequence, or in employment opportunity? It is a Protean question asked in different accents by different groups, tribal councils, families, individuals. It is a question with many ramifications, many possible answers, and one that invites discussion.

## SESSION VIII: LITERATURE AND REALITY

Chair: Silvester J. Brito, University of Wyoming.

### Dorothee Von Huene, Pace University. **Old World Fathers, Gods, and the New Land**

The immigrant experience can heighten the inevitable tensions between father and child to the point where they are destructive. The polarization between the culture of the old world and that of the new can be so great that the immigrant experiences it as a violent struggle between good and evil which threatens to rupture family relationships and destroy people physically and spiritually. This struggle is revealed in historical, psychological, and sociological studies of immigrants and ethnics. Ethnic literary works, frequently based on personal experience, can provide valuable supplements to the research of these disciplines.

Four ethnic novels, *Christ in Concrete* by Pietro Di Donato, *He, The Father* by Frank Mlakar, *Lion at My Heart* by Harry Petrakis, and *Bread Givers* by Anzia Yezierska, are all written by twentieth-century first- and second-generation Americans of four different ethnic groups: Italian, Slovenian, Greek, and Russian Jew. Two of them are clearly autobiographical. In each novel, one major character, usually the protagonist, distances himself from the values of his or her father in spite of the fact that the father seems to be an ally or even associate of God. The resulting tensions hobble the immigrant in his efforts to fit into the new world.

Joseph A. Young, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. **Revising the Myth: *The Homesteader* and *The Wind from Nowhere*.**

Oscar Micheaux's approach to literature offers interesting insight into the conservative Afroamerican plan for achieving success in America, flying the banner of Jim Crowism. His plan includes a kind of socialist agrarianism for blacks: that is, to succeed, blacks should migrate west and homestead on ten acre plots. Micheaux intended to communicate these themes through his novels. Micheaux is overly optimistic about American cultural pluralism and is excessively pessimistic about the ability of blacks to survive in America without his scheme; this is partly attributable to his reliance on the crude racial theories which dismiss blacks as inferior and partly attributable to his addressing whites and conservative blacks when he considered his audience.

Lee Hadley, Iowa State University. **The Lone Ranger Lied: Tonto Wasn't Real**

A writer for young adults looks back with amazement at the myths about Native Americans that were part of childhood. How those myths were dispelled, how the tentative beginnings of understanding a different culture came about forms the basis of the paper. Writing a book about the Mesquakie people at a certain point in history provided a challenge and a dilemma. Difficulties in historical research, use of language, fear of being insensitive to cultural differences—all of these face a cross-cultural writer. And then reviews—who to believe: the Native American who read the book and said, "Yes, this is real," or the reviewers who read the book and said, "Hollywood stereotypes."

Ann Irwin, Iowa State University. **White Like Me: A Problem or Plus for a Writer**

A serious writer for young adults attempting to further human understanding approaches cross-cultural themes cautiously. Can a white author write honestly about a black? Can a white author write honestly about a Native American? Can a white author write honestly about a Japanese American child incarcerated in American camps during World War II? Does color or culture of an author pose a problem? This paper explores the problems encountered in determining language, audience, implications and concludes that perhaps the greatest value of crossing ethnic lines is realized by the author, who will never be the same after researching and writing a book such as *I Be Somebody* (Hadley Irwin-Atheneum-1984).

## SESSION IX: PAST TO FUTURE

Chair: Eugene Kim, California State University, Sacramento.

John P. Roche, Rhode Island College. **Social Factors Affecting Cultural, National, and Religious Ethnicity: A Study of Suburban Italian Americans**

This study, using a previously employed attitudinal ethnicity scale, investigates the state of ethnicity among a sample of suburban Italian Americans. Unlike many previous studies, respondents were not simply classified into an ethnic category. This study measured the degree of attachment to the cultural, national, and religious aspects of ethnicity. Ethnic scores were analyzed by generation, occupational status, income, age, sex, suburb, education, ethnic identification, spouse's ethnic identification, and parents' ethnic background. A number of social factors were found to be significantly related to attitudinal ethnicity.

Robbie Jean Walker, Auburn University, Birmingham. **The Politics of Black American Literary Expression**

Black American literary expression is revelatory of the writer's attitudes towards the dominant political system, and her or his views concerning the proper positioning

of blacks in the American social structure. A tripartite scheme of analysis developed by the sociologist William A. Gamson and projected along a continuum is utilized for the purpose of analyzing the political attitudes or political postures of writers who have attained some prominence during the past seventy years; the major finding of the study is that the more politically alienated the writer, the more likely is he or she to find the materials of black social life—the social life of a subordinated and persecuted minority group—a culturally self-sufficient basis for the exercise of the writer's art. In addition to literary scholarship, insights derived from the fields of political science, political sociology, the sociology of knowledge, and social anthropology are utilized in the analysis and in arriving at the conclusions of the study.

**Discussant: Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, Italian American Historical Association**

Robbie Jean Walker's essay, "Politics of Black American Literary Expression," is distinctive in that it deepens literary analysis by relating it to a political dimension. Her use of the Gamson scale (confidence, scepticism, alienation) to evaluate the status and prospects of black America is done with perception and wisdom. What is striking about Walker's essay is her relating black literature to political prospects of black America. She suggests that the radicalization of the politics of black Americans may be related to a literature of alienation from white culture; an integral part of radicalization is related to a reassertion of black identity and the validity of the black experience.

Very different is John Patrick Roche's sociological study of suburban Italian Americans, appraising the degree of their ethnicity. Testing the thesis of renewed ethnicity among Italian Americans, Roche concludes that this ethnic group has declining levels of ethnic consciousness (except for a small highly educated group).

Since my research is in the area of Italian Americans, may I say that I find Roche's methodology not entirely adequate (Italian American literature is more revealing than questionnaires), but that I would tend to agree with his dismal finding. At present Italian Americans are being feted as an ethnic group that has "made it." We may have an Italian American woman vice president, and presidential plans are already afoot for Lee Iacocca. This is Italian American identification with the U.S. mainstream, with little interest in the radical change that is necessary. And it is accompanied by only superficial knowledge of the Italian American experience, Italian history, or of contemporary Italy.

Italy's radical legacy to Italian Americans includes socialist agitation in the 1890s prior to emigration to the United States, and two salient contemporary facts. Italy has the largest Eurocommunist party of the west (an independent party with new left premises) and Italy has produced what may be the strongest feminist movement of the world.

Italian Americans with some knowledge of their Italian legacy might be a significant variable in removing the blinders of U.S. domestic and foreign policy. A deeper meaning of "ethnicity" for Italian Americans may be not whether they like bocce ball clubs, but whether they know what is going on in contemporary Italy. Italians refer to an "unedited marxism" in their work for an equalitarian society that will cherish differences, not differences of superior-inferior, but differences inherent in genuinely different perceptions of the world. These genuinely different perceptions refer to different experiences of different ethnic groups. Italian women also stress their experiential differences from men, and experiential differences of women among themselves.

For Sicilian women who are engaged in non-violent resistance to nuclear missiles at Comiso, Sicily, their work as feminists is a struggle against "one people over another, one race over another, one sex over another."

## SESSION X: PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

Chair: Margaret Laughlin, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay.

### Carlos Ortega, California State University, Northridge. **On Education and Work in Tomorrow's Mexican Community in Los Angeles**

Describing the Mexican Community of Los Angeles, this paper examines current trends in education and work and the impact of technological change on this community by the year 2000. Attention is given to needed changes in schools and work place so the working class of the Mexican community and minority and working class individuals in general might avoid becoming a permanent underclass. Community members and educators must work together to create a learning environment which would help to prevent displacement from work and education using Freire's notion of praxis as a guide.

### Deema DeSilva, Wichita State University, KS. **The Imperatives for Educational Reform and Their Implications for Minority Education Programs**

In order to be increasingly effective in offering equal opportunity for quality education, we must make a strong commitment to achieving goals, we must create new avenues to reach minority students and motivate them to achieve excellence in education. To this end we have to formulate a rigorous program to gain basic study skills, scientific, literacy and computer skills. Expect students to have self-discipline and maintain high standards of promptness, punctuality and attendance, for each one of our students has a right to excel.

### Ashton Welch, Creighton University. **Ethnicity and American Political Culture**

Ethnicity in American political life is the concern of this paper. It examines impacts on the American political culture as well as on the political structure which resulted from efforts to make the political system more accessible to minorities. The examination is limited to the post-Civil War era. It notes, however, that the very nature of American society makes linkages between ethnicity and the political culture inescapable. It posits that legal decisions and legislative enactments sometimes have results beyond their democratic intent: they create strains on the federal structure; and their benefits can be used by all residents as they affect the entire population. It suggests that statutory and constitutional enactments are subject to varied interpretations and applications. Such interpretations and applications can be inconsistent with the intentions of the authors of the law or provisions in question. The paper concludes minorities are making political advances because of changes in the structure of the political culture.

### Discussant: Nancy M. Osborn, Iowa State University

It is refreshing to be allowed to ponder the future and to do so with the optimism that we, as distinct ethnic beings, can effect positive changes toward that future. The proposals for culture change regarding ethnic minorities in America put forth in this session are desirable ones. However, we should caution ourselves from the outset that certain directed cultural change can be detrimental—such as subjugation of the defeated by a conqueror, one realization of the dire Orwellian prediction.

For desirable, healthful cultural evolution, then, there are certain requirements. First, the proposed changes must be viewed as desirable and necessary by the minority population involved. Secondly, there is no getting around the fact that *time* is a necessary factor for successful culture change—time for values to become realigned and time for trust among ethnic groups to become established. As a third point, it must be noted that culture change is never a “one-way” transmission; members of the predominant culture, as well as those of the ethnic minority culture, will be affected by contact and interaction one with the other.

Certainly education emerges as the logical and most efficient vehicle for bringing about desired changes for minority ethnic groups in the future. However, as pointed out here, America's educational system has slipped into complacency and mediocrity, an illness which affects *both* the predominant and minority cultures in our society. We see a capitulation to teach to the level of the “average” student so as to maintain and

stabilize college and high school enrollments. And even we as scholars within the educational system have "let slip" our basic language communications skills. One crisis in education cannot be solved quickly: teaching cannot be upgraded until there is a commensurate increase in pay and respect to teachers. Teachers are not likely to "stretch" to higher standards without such support, and educators cannot instill in their students the desire to reach for excellence if they themselves do not subscribe to that goal.

As preparation for the future, educators must sensitize students of the dominant culture as to the difficulties experienced by minorities. One method would be to require that all English speakers study a second language. It is only by stepping out of the strait jacket of one's own first language that the student can come to grips with what it is like to be forced to think in another. Language is the mirror of ethnic "being"—it both reflects and governs the way in which its speakers view the world around them.

Acceptance and the finding of "a place" in American society will come about more easily for some ethnic minorities than for others. Young Southeast Asians transplanted into the California educational system, for example, have been viewed as "a teacher's dream." This is not so much a result of above-average intelligence as it is a factor of cultural "pre-conditioning." The values of the students' Asian heritage—respect for their elders, particularly those in the role of teacher, and a desire to bring honor to the family by excelling—just happen to be congruent with the goals of the American educational system.

Politics, as well as formal education, will play a role in the future of ethnic minorities in America. There is a desperate need for persons of the various ethnic subgroups to be schooled in the ways of the political system. Ethnic and minority peoples *do* have political clout, but only if they know that they have it and only if they know how to direct it. Granted, true cultural evolution cannot be legislated, but the passage of any social reform legislation signals that a need for change is realized and that change is possible.

## SESSION XI: POLITICS AND EDUCATION

Chair: David Muga, Seattle, WA.

### **Ernest Pon, Sacramento City Unified School District, CA. *The Hmong and Mien: Beyond ESOL Training Programs***

This paper shows how English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes are inadequate in preparing the Hmong and Mien in adjusting to an American lifestyle. The Hmong and Mien are ill-prepared to deal with a technological, twentieth century society that we as Americans take for granted. The Hmong and Mien face different problems than other "refugee" groups who have settled in the United States in recent years. This paper shows how service agencies will better serve their clients (refugees) if they have more cross-cultural information and are culturally sensitive to their clients.

### **Frank Cavaoli, SUNY, Farmingdale. *A Perspective on Electoral Behavior***

This paper summarizes the recent research on the New Political History. It shows how ethnicity is a major force and a major variable in shaping political behavior. Ethnocultural factors help determine political attitudes which precede electoral activity by the citizen. This paper accepts the pluralistic nature of American society, and it rejects the melting pot concept. Based upon empirical research, this paper asserts that people tend to vote for candidates of their own ethnic group.

### **Keith D. Parker, Mississippi State University. *Minorities and Higher Education: The Challenge of the 1980s***

This paper examines (1) what progress, if any, was made during the 1960s and 1970s to raise the educational level of minorities, and (2) what is the current status of minorities in higher education? If Mayhew's (1974) timetable is accurate, educational institutions are in a period of neglect, and minorities will be neglected most.

Discussant: Ann Whitaker, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

The three papers presented in Session XI reflect common themes and similarities. For example, the papers, "A Perspective on Electoral Behavior," by Cavaioi; "Minorities and Higher Education: The Challenge of the 1980s" by Parker; and "The Hmong and Mien: Beyond ESOL Training Programs" by Pon focus on ethnicity (Italians, blacks, Laotians); lack of cultural sensitivity; the importance of ethnic group behavior; educational problems; cultural differences; geographical differences; institutional racism; the pluralistic nature of society; political powerlessness; assimilation, acculturation, and accommodation.

Pon discusses the problems encountered by the Hmong and Mien, two small tribal groups from the mountains of Laos, in adjusting to the American lifestyle. Part of the difficulty lies in the transition from a rural culture to culture which is highly technological. The problems include medical care, (Shaman vs. western medical doctor); cash economy (cash vs. barter); geographical locations in the city; and modern appliances (stove, refrigerator).

The author suggests that in addition to teaching the Hmong and Mien traditional ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) classes, other needs need to be addressed in assisting these two groups to adapt/acclerate to an American lifestyle. These needs include home management, health care information, and vocational training. Competency Based Adult Education (CBAE) along with culturally sensitive organizations are further means by which the Hmong and Mien can be assisted in adjusting to the American lifestyle.

This paper could have been enhanced by the author giving the reader an *historical* perspective on the Hmong and Mien. The political implications need further explanation. Just to point out that many people from various locations in Southeast Asia were forced to leave beginning in 1975 is not sufficient. Why did they leave? What were the "oppressive conditions"? Did the United States grant refugee status to the Southeast Asians because of guilt feelings regarding Vietnam? What pressure can be placed upon the U.S. government to adhere to its promises of money, housing, vocational training, job search skills, language skills, and Americanization classes?

Secondly, in addition to indicating some of the problems faced by the Hmong and Mien upon arriving in this country, perhaps a comparison/contrast could have been discussed regarding the rural aspects in order to highlight the cultural differences.

From the perspective of culture or cultural transition, one could argue for the institution or initiation of some form of public policy which would mandate that *Americans* become reacculturated in terms of new groups coming into this country. It should not be assumed that the "new group" has to be the only group that learns to *adapt*. *The host culture* also needs to adapt to the new incoming group.

Cavaioi argues that for various reasons, people tend to vote for candidates of their own ethnic group and suggests that "group voting" is part of the development of the New Political History. This may be true, but we do not get a sense of what this New Political History is nor are we given concrete examples to support the author's position.

To suggest that the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision revitalized "ethnicity" is erroneous. First of all, various ethnic groups have *always*, throughout the development of this country, maintained their ethnic identity—long before World War I. Second, the 1954 Supreme Court decision maintained that "separate but equal" was illegal. Part of the reason for this separateness had to do with feelings of ethnic superiority.

Third, it is true that various ethnic groups, such as the Irish, Poles, Jews, and Greeks, became involved in the political arena. What is untrue is that these ethnic groups *did not* include "migrating blacks and poor whites" into their political arena. Blacks have been systematically excluded from participating in the political arena of the Democratic Party.

Additionally, catalyst may be the wrong word to use in terms of the Black Revolution. A catalyst is a *chemical reaction* that causes other properties to change while remaining unchanged itself. The Black Revolution (a) caused changes from within *and* without and (b) had nothing to do with the culture accepting ethnic group differences. This country was built on ethnic group differences, socially and politically.

Questions which can be raised included: What is the difference between ethnic groups and racial groups? What are the social and political ramifications for ethnic

group bloc voting? How will this form of voting increase changes in public policy? How can the American culture institute the melting pot concept? What concrete recommendations can be put forth which include all ethnic groups in the political arena? What are the implications of ethnicity as a variable in measuring political (group) behavior?

According to Parker's research on the characteristic phases of the organizational pattern of social institutions, there are three. Phase one, dynamic growth, found educational institutions meeting social expectations and expanding. Phase two, was a period of conflict. Phase three, a period of neglect, found institutions meeting the reduced expectations, and becoming indifferent, passive, and stagnated.

The author suggests that according to the above phases, educational institutions are in phase two, a period of neglect. In this phase, social expectations decline because they outrun capabilities and thus, institutions remain able to only meet reduced expectations. Therefore, indifference, passivity, and stagnation exists.

Parker maintains that if educational institutions are to meet the future needs of education, there are several things that must be done. Among them are planning skills which address changes of decline in resources; phased-scheduling techniques to preserve programs; curricula designed to meet the career goals of students; balance allocation of scarce resources; and becoming aware of the human condition in relation to priorities and maintenance of specific moral values.

The review of the literature in this paper focuses on the progress made in the 60's and 70's to raise the educational level of minorities and the current status of minorities in regard to higher education. In the 60's there were community colleges which served as class bound tracking institutions mechanisms and four-year colleges and universities which credentialed students for the job market. The 1970s found many minority students enrolled in two-year colleges and those minority students who enrolled in predominantly white colleges/universities, encountered various difficulties. There was a decrease in minority student enrollment on the undergraduate, graduate, and professional level.

The current trend in higher education, according to the author, is toward a planned shrinkage of educational goods and services. In light of this trend, several components and recommendations are presented.

There appears to be a slight problem with the phases of the organizational pattern of social institutions presented by Parker. Clarity of these phases as well as *examples* would enhance the paper. For example, in phase one, there is no description of "social expectations." Phase two mentions conflict. What kind of conflict? How was the conflict resolved? Phase three needs to indicate examples of capabilities, indifference, passivity, and stagnation. Other questions which need to be raised include the genesis of these phases and whether or not the phases repeat themselves as well as the logical conclusion of each phase. That is, does each phase HAVE TO FOLLOW or can the phases skip from one to three? Do these phases occur over time? How much, if any, are these phases affected by educational policy?

Other comments include the implication of the narrowing of minority-majority differential in college graduation. What does this minority-majority differential imply in terms of other ethnic groups who are attempting to enter and graduate from institutions of higher education? What should be the role of educational institutions in affecting policy to reverse the current trends? Should industry/employers adopt a school policy whereby students obtain on the job training and be considered potential employees upon graduation?

Other points which can be raised include *specific* policy for recruitment and retention and *concrete* implementation of recommendations of educational policies to more equitably benefit minorities.



## SESSION XII: HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Chair: Barbara L. Hiura, Sacramento City Unified School District, CA.

### Gladys Ebert and Juanita Palmerhall, Iowa State University. **An American Indian Student Association Tutoring Program: Implications for Creating Cultural Awareness**

The purpose of this research is to study the effects of a tutoring program for Native American elementary and junior high school youth on university students. A pretest and posttest control group design was used with the college student tutors. Questionnaires administered to the American Indian students along with parent/teacher interviews were used to measure effects on the Native American youth. The study is in process and preliminary findings demonstrate a very positive effect on the attitudes toward and knowledge of the American Indians by the university students.

### Silvester J. Brito, University of Wyoming. **The Role of the Folk Healer in Western American Literature**

This paper examines the role of the Curandero(as) in literature of the Southwest, with a special focus on Mexican-American and Native American novels, short stories and poetry by authors of these two socio-cultural groups. Within this context it is postulated that the phenomenon, magical realism, formulates a basis for the role types which are played by these faith healers, herbal doctors, i.e., Curanderos(as) and medicine men (medicine women) who are either the main or secondary characters in these three genre forms of Western American literatures.

### Peter Kranz and José Vega, Spanish Peaks Mental Health Center. **Hispanic Suicide: A Need for More Information**

This paper focuses on the increasing problem of Hispanic suicides in the United States. The fact that there is almost no available data on this growing problem was explored. The difficulty in obtaining the data in Pueblo County (Colorado) was given as an example. Among other reasons, Hispanic suicide was attributed to acculturation of other cultural values while retarding their own. The possibility of hopelessness in relation to suicide and the suicide among Puerto Ricans called "suicidal fit" was also explored. The attitudes of the Mexican-American community remain traditional toward suicide, and suicide was not recognized as an increasing problem, although data pointed otherwise. Suicide continued to be perceived as cowardly and against the teachings of the Catholic Church. More research needs to be done to this area, and there is a great need for the systematic collection of data.

### Discussant: Stewart Rodnon, Rider College.

Last year at this conference I was the discussant on a panel at which three papers were given: their topics were continued discrimination against women in sports, an electric utility encroachment on Native-American religious sites, and alcoholism among Native Americans in Alaska. I, a mere American Literature professor, was then asked for a synthesizing statement. It was a task that might have killed a normal man. However, evidently I did a satisfactory job for my summary appeared verbatim in our journal, and Charles Irby, to my embarrassment, praised it publicly the other night. That might have moved me towards being guilty of *hubris*, but then I checked this year's group of papers—and they had raised the hurdles higher, giving me Hispanic suicides, the interplay between high school American Indians and WASP college tutors, and folk healing in Mexican-American literature.

Fearful of stumbling in my attempts to clear each hurdle, I thought that I simply would suggest that the faith-healer, or sorcerer, could solve all of these problems. However, this kind of facetious evasion won't wash in a high-powered group like this. So realizing that I feel like an academic utility infielder, let me offer some brief comments on each paper and a concluding generalization.

Concerning the tutoring of American Indians by WASP college students, I found this a pleasantly optimistic paper. Clearly, bringing together two differing groups is bound to be a testing of ingrained prejudices, and this scientific evaluation of the improved attitudes in both groups was overdue. Happily, it seems to confirm what will happen as ignorance is dispelled: the changes were strongly positive—an understanding of, and more respect for, the other's value system did occur. One can only say

this project was a good idea, it was well-implemented, and it offers a happy ending.

The paper on Hispanic suicides offers some intriguing and discomfoting observations. It is unfortunate that data seems so difficult to obtain, and I am not positive if the reason is racism or simply lack of funding in general for these kinds of statistics. I found it interesting to note that there has been a prevailing myth that suicide is rare, or at least that very low rates occur, among minorities. But then I recalled in William Faulkner's *The Bear* that an ante-bellum white Southerner asserts "Niggers don't commit suicide." I'm sure that it suits racists to assert that these "inferior" ethnic groups don't have deep sensitivity and simply, animal-like, accept unthinkingly their physical pain and mental anguish. I found the paper commendable for raising three disturbing ideas:

- (1) in recent years rates of suicide, according to statistics, have grown extremely rapidly among Mexican-Americans, far more rapidly than those for Anglos;
- (2) suicides are more frequent among the young, prime-of-life Hispanics, a time when physical health problems are not likely to be a factor as they might be for aging Anglos;
- (3) fewer Mexican-Americans agreed that the suicide rate is higher for minorities, and this might mean a turning away from the problem by the ethnic group itself.

I thought that the third paper, on faith healing as indicative of the way Mexican-American artists use "magical realism" as "symbolic image," was extremely well-done. The use of Alurista's fine poem, "Must be the Season of the Witch," was a good choice in pointing out the sustaining vitality of the original myth and its contemporary re-working by a sensitive artist. More, perhaps, could have been made of the witch's cry of agony as she sees her sons devoured in the bowels of the factories, symbol of ethnic groups being destroyed by an acquisitive, materialistic, and obsessed Establishment. The emphasis, though, on the awareness of the logically inexplicable is a valid and valuable part of the Chicano heritage.

From these diverse topics, it may be possible to generalize on the route we must take in order to solve our ethnic dilemma. Today, the ideal solution, the ideal program, I would argue, would be to bring all ethnic minorities—but especially blacks, Native-Americans, and Hispanics—totally into the economic mainstream through quality formal education and through the breaking down of racial stereotyping and prejudices, while at the same time emphatically emphasizing that these members of the minority group should keep all, or at least—subject to extremely careful analysis—the most valuable parts of their cultural heritage: their art, dance, oral traditions, holidays, foods, religious and social customs which have been successful in meeting life's challenges for centuries. How soon, or if ever, this will be done is impossible to predict if we examine our historical track record, especially in the climate of a capitalist, racist, materialistic America in 1984. It seems fair to say, though, that awareness of ethnicity has been a positive and encouraging sign during the last twenty years. Additionally, a note of hope has been struck at several panels of this annual conference, in the reports of pockets of progress by small groups who worked desperately hard to make some gains which should help to improve the America that our children will populate.

### **Saturday Session: Media Development**

#### **Barbara L. Hiura, Sacramento, CA. Ethnic Images in White Popular Culture**

This slide presentation shows some historical and current images of coloured ethnic people in white popular culture. While illustrating how the current images reinforce negative stereotypes, these slides also illustrate how pervasive cultural ignorance is among Americans. More important, however, the images demonstrate the increasing lack of sensitivity within coloured ethnic populations.

American Indian, Asiamerican, black, and Mexican American images are shown in various negative settings. Most of the images reflect a Euroamerican stereotypical perception of culture history. In most cases, the Euroamerican images portray a static and distorted version of ethnic history as well as present harmful ethnic characterizations. It is my hope that this presentation will promote research in the areas of cultural imperialism and economic exploitation as motivating factors in perpetuating negative images, especially those supported by ethnic groups themselves.

#### **Charles C. Irby, Ames, IA. Blacks in Film**

This presentation represents a work in progress, *The Celluloid Black*, which will be ready for distribution by the Iowa State University Research Foundation later this year. Oscar Micheaux is discussed as a pioneer filmmaker and a would-be novelist. The discussion, however, centers on the joys and problems associated with doing a slide-tape production with scarce resources.