

The Editor Notes . . .

On a visit to the Mesquakie Settlement during May of this year, one elder told me that there were too many distractions for the children to fully comprehend the traditions as she had learned them as a child. As I reflected on her comments, I realized that she truly had cause for alarm: Although Mesquakies have contended with many, many great pressures since their removal and return to Iowa during the last century, they have only in recent history had to contend with the all-pervasive power of television to create, destroy, distort, form, mold, and shape images of reality—although television is less brutalizing than some educational experiences many Mesquakies had in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.

Most of us, by the time we become adults, understand that *images are symbols of reality*. Jack Forbes demonstrates how symbols became *the* reality for Anglo-Saxons in the U.S. and elsewhere in their perceptions and identification of aboriginal Americans as “blacks”—an historic problem which continues to be extant in 1984. Forbes’s article, following the trend set by the last issue of the journal, suggests problems we encounter when we accept language imperialism either on the printed page or that which is projected electronically.

Silvester Brito’s contribution asks us to think about how traditional Western scholarship has painted a false picture of traditional Native American songs. He shows how some Indian poets use the language of the imperialists to give themselves voice in contemporary U.S. society. Lee Hadley and Annabelle Irwin look at language and reality, too. They look at the images which were formed by their own backgrounds and how they went beyond their niches to engage in writing multicultural fiction for young readers. Brito, Hadley, and Irwin have revealed the “nuts and bolts” of cultural specificity and look at the process of cultural change. They essentially show how the “process of creating culture” works.

While I am on nomenclature: Why are aboriginal Hawaiians called Pacific Islanders rather than Native Americans? Why are the aboriginal inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands called Aleuts (or Eskimos) rather than Pacific Islanders or Native Americans?

The 1984 Annual Conference in Kansas City was the most exciting and stimulating to date, and the Executive Council has made plans to return to the same location in 1985. Come to the Conference. Help create a unique experience for ethnic studies scholars.

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