

*national
association
for ethnic
studies*

NAES

**ETHNIC
STUDIES
REVIEW**

Cultural Insights: Practices and Policies

**2008
Volume 31
Issue 2**

The National Association for Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies Review (ESR) is the journal of the National Association for Ethnic Studies (NAES). ESR is a multi-disciplinary international journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, ethnic groups and their cultures, and inter-group relations. NAES has as its basic purpose the promotion of activities and scholarship in the field of Ethnic Studies. The Association is open to any person or institution and serves as a forum for its members in promoting research, study, and curriculum as well as producing publications of interest in the field. NAES sponsors an annual spring conference.

Editor: Otis L. Scott, California State University, Sacramento
Book Review Editor: Annette Reed, California State University, Sacramento

Editorial Advisory Board

Edna Acosta-Belen University at Albany, SUNY	Rosanne Kanhai Western Washington University
Jorge A. Bustamante El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Mexico)	Paul Lauter Trinity College
Duane W. Champagne University of California, Los Angeles	Robert L. Perry Eastern Michigan University
Laura Coltelli University de Pisa (Italy)	Otis L. Scott California State University, Sacramento
Russell Endo University of Colorado	Alan Spector Purdue University, Calum
David M. Gradwohl Iowa State University	K. Victor Ujimoto University of Guelph (Canada)
Maria Herrera-Sobek University of California, Irvine	Jesse Vazquez Queens College
Evelyn Hu-DeHart Brown University	John C. Walter University of Washington
Vernon Johnson Western Washington University	Bernard Young Arizona State University
Rhett S. Jones Brown University	

Designed by Eileen Claveloux

Ethnic Studies Review (ESR) is published by the National Association for Ethnic Studies for its individual and subscribing libraries and institutions. NAES is a member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals.

Copyright © ESR, The National Association for Ethnic Studies, 1996. All rights reserved. Written authorization to photocopy any part of this publication, store in a retrieval system, or transmit by any means must be obtained from NAES.

ISSN: 1555-1881

ESR

ETHNIC STUDIES REVIEW

The Journal of the
National Association for Ethnic Studies

Volume 31, Issue No. 2

Winter, 2008

Cultural Insights: Practices and Policies

General Editor: Otis L. Scott

Table of Contents

Editor's Notes.....	i
Contributors.....	iii

ARTICLES

The Dialectics of "Oriental" Images in American Trade Cards Sue J. Kim.....	1
Use of Multiple Methods: An Examination of Constraints Effecting Ethnic Minority Visitor Use of National Parks and Management Implications Nina S. Roberts Donald A. Rodriguez.....	35
Fire in de Cane: Metaphors of Indo Trinidadian Identity in Ramabai Espinet's <u>The Swinging Bridge</u> Rosanne Kanhai.....	71
(In) Visible Fissures and the "Multicultural American: Interrupting Race, Ethnicity, and Imperialism Through TV's <u>Survivor</u> Sarah Hentges	101
The Tastes from Portugal: Food as Remembrances in Portuguese American Literature Reinaldo Silva	126
To Arrange or Not: Marriage Trends in the South Asian American Community Farha Ternikar	153
Are We Happy Yet?: Re-evaluating the Evolution of Indigenous Community Development Kerin Gould.....	201

Book Reviews

- Sucheng Chan (ed). *The Vietnamese-American 1.5 Generation*,
reviewed by Quan Manh Ha 201
- Mark Christian Thompson. *Black Fascisms:
African American Literature and Culture Between the Wars*,
reviewed by Bill Lyne 203
- J. Phillip Thompson III. *Double Trouble:
Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy*,
reviewed by Ricky Green..... 204
- Jim Zwick. *Inuit Entertainers in the United States*,
reviewed by Brian Baker..... 206
- Edward Charles Valandra. *Not without Our Consent:
Lakota Resistance to Termination, 1950-59*,
reviewed by Marlon D.Sherman 208

EDITOR'S NOTES

The articles in this issue, while diverse in subject matter, focus, and voice, draw our attention to the rich interdisciplinary perspectives framing scholarly excursions into the realm of ethnic studies. The contributing authors of these seven articles draw our attention to how the constructs of human culture be it art, cultural formations, cultural products, or policies and practices can and do inform us about how people interpret, reproduce life and represent living. With some attention we also learn about how a people navigate through the place or places where they find themselves and how they are affected by and affect the societies within they live.

Sue J. Kim's article "The Dialectics of 'Oriental' Images in American Trade Cards" explores how contradictory themes shaping images of Asian immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th century United States were influenced by images of Asians on popular postcard size advertisements containing images of people of Asian descent in the United States. The article "Use of Multiple Methods: An Examination of Constraints Effecting Ethnic Minority Visitor Use of National Parks and Management Implications" co authored by Nina S. Roberts and Donald A Rodriguez, provides an interesting study of how ethnicity shapes self perceptions of both visitors and non visitors, e.g., national park service employee. There are interesting policy implications for park officials in this article. Also there are instructive lessons for potential users regarding self imposed constraints which limit national park visitations as a possible source recreation. Rosanne Kanhai's "Fire in de Cane: Metaphors of Indo Trinidadian Identify in Ramabai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge*" explores the historical, cultural and social factors shaping the identity of people of Indian ancestry in the Caribbean, but particularly those residing on the island of Trinidad. Drawing from the work of Ramabai Espinet, Professor Kanhai explores how the author's metaphors, e.g. "swinging bridge" serve to tie together the histories of people from India with those of indigenous people on Trinidad and elsewhere.

Tin the article "(In) Visible Fissures and the 'Multicultural'

American: Interrupting Race, Ethnicity, and Imperialism through TV's *Survivor*" Sarah Hentges offers an analysis of how this popular television "reality" program structures nuanced and not so subtle themes relating to identity formation, ethnicity, class, gender into a hyped version of a multicultural story line. However, as the author explains, the story line built around the relationships of the contestants, raises more questions regarding structured in ethnic and race discrimination than meets the eye of the casual viewer. Reinaldo Silva's "The Tastes from Portugal: Food as Remembrances in Portuguese American Literature" examines how contemporary Portuguese American writers use food to convey important cultural messages. Silva writes that references to food are devices by which the writer maintains a connection to her/his heritage while simultaneously declaring an identity. Farha Ternikar's article "To Arrange or Not: Marriage Trends in the South Asian American Community" is a comparative study of how traditional forms of marriage among South Asian Americans in the greater Chicago area are changing. The author asserts that changes in generational mind sets regarding marriage along with the influences of religion are giving rise to other forms of marriage. In the article "Are We Happy Yet?: Re-Evaluating the Evaluation of Indigenous Community Development" Kerin Gould challenges researchers, program heads and community activists to reevaluate claims of doing work on behalf of indigenous people. How do we know that community projects help improve the welfare status of native communities? This article challenges all to re examine the epistemologies used to determine what is progress and how is it determined. Similarly this article challenges Indigenous people to re examine the standards they employ for measuring progress and improvement.

Collectively, these articles will provoke much thinking and conversation; this is good.

Otis L. Scott
California State University, Sacramento

CONTRIBUTORS

Sue J. Kim is an assistant professor of English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She specializes in critical theory, contemporary literature, and ethnic studies.

Nina S. Roberts is an assistant professor in the Department of Recreations and Leisure Studies at San Francisco State University.

Donald A. Rodriguez is an associate professor of Environmental Science and Resource Management at California State University, Channel Islands.

Rosanne Kanhai is a professor of English and Director of Women's Studies at Western Washington University.

Sarah Hentges is a Libra professor of American Studies at the University of Maine at Augusta.

Reinaldo Silva teaches in the department of Linguas e Culturas, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal.

Farha Ternikar is an assistant professor at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. Her teaching areas include race and ethnic relations and gender and society.

Kerin Gould after living with a Hñãñhu community in Mexico and working with Indigenous activists in the US, returned to complete her doctorate in Native American Studies at the University of California, Davis

THE DIALECTICS OF “ORIENTAL” IMAGES IN AMERICAN TRADE CARDS

Sue J. Kim
University of Alabama, Birmingham

A late nineteenth-century trade card, or a color-printed circulating advertisement, touts Shepherd and Doyle’s new “Celluloid” waterproof collars, cuffs and shirt bosoms (Fig. 1).¹ These “economical, durable, and handsome” clothing items require less starching and washing, and so remove the need for Chinese laundries. The text on the reverse side includes directions on how “to remove yellow stains,” and the image enacts a kind of literal version of this removal. The slovenly laundryshop (the clothes overflowing the basket, the linens hung up askew, the steaming basins), the mix-and-match, gender-ambiguous garments of the workers, and their thin, slouching bodies all participate in the racist stereotype of Asians as dirty, effeminate and alien others. The caption proclaims the product to be “The Last Invention”; the “last” indicates finality, both in terms of modernity as the final stage of history and of a solution to the problem of unwanted immigrants. A group of Chinese male laundry-workers are so taken aback by this product that their pigtailed stand in erect consternation. Their reaction stems both from the realization that they must return to China because their services have become unnecessary as well as

from pure awe at the invention itself; in both cases, the scenario and its appeal apparently rely on these acts of recognition by the Chinese characters. Furthermore, the advertisement's status as such – merely advertisement – hides the illogicality of the celluloid salesman's presence in the laundry at all. The salesman, wearing a garish plaid suit and a bowler hat, appears to be one of those traveling salesmen who might peddle patent medicines, yet he bears the product eliciting such awe and consternation. Rather than selling the product to the Chinese workers, he appears simply to be taking gratuitous pleasure in introducing the workers to the agent of their impending misfortunes.

This example suggests the “work” of such trade cards in a number of ways. The erect queues, figures of fetishistic fascination for the American public, signal both fear and desire. And like the Chinese workers' relation to the product in the center, the viewer assumes a role of both repulsion and identification with the Chinese figures, the salesman, and the product. The viewer is supposed to desire the object, but unlike the Chinese, the viewer should not fear it. The viewer, alternately, should identify with the salesman, but, particularly to middle-class consumers to whom such products are directed, he is not a figure of refinement and style. Modern technology forces the Chinese out and “cleanses” the nation of racial others, but the images also produce an anxiety of identification through the fear of being forced out of work by technological advancements. Such advertising images participate in the construction of the Other – national, sexual, racial, class, etc. – but their appeal is also often based on an uncanny identification with those figures of otherness, betraying an anxiety about those demarcations and differences. This particular card (Fig. 1) fantasizes a solution to the problem of Chinese immigration as a salve to anxieties over national and racial purity. At the same time, the card appeals to the middle-class's anxiety to distinguish itself from others, partly in the valuation of cleanliness and technology, partly in the collection of Oriental objects. The cards provide a cheap and accessible way to access this middle-class cultural capital; unlike valuable Asian art and collectibles, or the Oriental rugs, furnishings, screens, fans, and other items the upper class displayed

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

in their living rooms, these cards circulated freely and widely. So although the figure of the Oriental is usually theorized as serving as an “other” for national identity as well as modernity, figures of the Orient and Orientals in trade cards help form national, modern, consumer, and class consciousness; by complex dialectics and situational variances of sameness and difference, identification and repulsion.² That is, while trade card images were certainly part of the racist imperialist project that was central to the construction of American identity, many images also betrayed the anxiety over the failure of those divides in time and space *and* over the agency of the other.

In this paper, I examine the ways in which such trade cards served as fetishes in psychic, social, and economic systems. The consumer’s fixation on the fetish object hides the ideological cultural work that creates the desire for the object, desire that is driven by lack and anxiety that are impossible to satisfy. In essence, I am asking what Thomas Kim asks, but of less exalted objects than the decorative furnishings that he studies. He writes, “It seems clear that Oriental objects and Oriental displays functioned as enticements to consumers, but why and how did they serve this function in modern consumer culture?”³ To explore these questions, I will explore the ways in which trade card images negotiate the complex, multiple dialectics at work in the creation of sometimes contradictory American national identities, particularly the middle-class. Robert Jay finds that trade cards gave the impression that “all Chinese in American were engaged in laundry work,” and that the U.S. fascination with all things Japanese was mobilized to sell luxury items and soap, but the cards often fail to be so clearly demarcated.⁴ It is true that images of the Chinese tended to take the form of laborers *in* the U.S. while figures of the Japan tended to be of kimono-clad women in faraway places, but China also figures as an exotic faraway land, vaguely connected to Japan. Furthermore, the figures of Chinese Americans are not always so obviously grotesque as in Fig. 1. The appeal of the images and their ideological import, depending on context, can be explicable although perhaps unexpected according to our current reading paradigms.

The Dialectics of Trade Cards

Trade cards circulated widely in the late nineteenth century. The development of cheap, full-color printing in the 1870s replaced woodcuts and copperplate engraving methods used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵ This enabled mass advertising campaigns that increased the popularity of these cards, which usually featured a color illustration on one side and text on the other.⁶ Because they could make use of color printing at a time when color advertisements in periodicals were rare and because they were relatively inexpensive to produce, by the 1880s and 90s, trade cards were the most popular form of advertising in America.⁷ Included with the product package or distributed by local shopkeepers, trade cards reached more households than any other medium. With the introduction of lithography in the early nineteenth century and improved transportation, smaller towns also began printing their own cards and publications, but the majority of trade cards were produced in the northeast.⁸

These trade cards, Jay notes, were “an essentially private medium,” meant to be viewed by the individual consumer and even collected and “cherished.”⁹ At the same time, trade cards were public, everywhere; in many respects, their effect worked through a number of such apparent contradictions. Much has been written about the role of popular culture in creating national, racial, and/or imperial identities through the exclusion of others. Anne McClintock argues that the unprecedented production and dissemination of advertisement contributed to the culture of modernity in “the discovery that by manipulating the semiotic space around the commodity, the unconscious as public space could also be manipulated.”¹⁰ “Imperial kitsch as consumer spectacle,” she writes, “could package, market, and distribute evolutionary racism on a hitherto unimagined scale. No preexisting form of organized racism had ever before been able to reach so large and so differentiated a mass of the populace.”¹¹ Racial discourses worked to define not only the home-nation citizenry and, increasingly, a distinct middle class, but also “dangerous” or marginal groups, like workers, Irish, prostitutes, feminists, gays and lesbians, etc.¹² In the U.S., Lisa Lowe argues that “the state has estranged Asian immigrants

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

through racialization and bars to citizenship, thus distancing Asian Americans, even as citizens, from the terrain of national culture.”¹³ Such quests for authenticity become particularly important yet also impossible in modernity.

As Walter Benjamin has pointed out, part of the mark of modernity lies in the decline of art’s aura, or the hallowed singularity of a particular original work of art. The ready reproducibility of images increases their accessibility and seriality, so their ideological work becomes increasingly flexible and uncertain.¹⁴ The only constant is that these images would indeed be manipulated. Elizabeth Kim finds in her study of trade cards in eighteenth-century Britain that, although representations of Asians, Africans, and American Indians varied widely and even contradicted one another, such racial images were invariably subsumed by imperial and capitalist interests. That is, the flexibility and variability of the images arise from the specific advantage to be gained in a commercial and political situation.¹⁵

So, certainly, these cards had practical (advertising) and ideological intents; as Richard Ohmann notes in his study of nineteenth-century advertisements, “without question the ‘you’ of these ads *could* read these images; if not, advertisers were paying for indecipherable communications.”¹⁶ But the ideological effects of any cultural product cannot be easily or uniformly determined. Jennifer Wicke points out that despite their intent, many factors influenced the actual effects of the cards, including individual differences, institutions, collectives, forms and genres, political economy, etc.; certainly, advertising images are “overdetermined.”¹⁷ As Linda Frost argues in *Never One Nation*, the regional press and local conceptions of identity in varying degrees of tension with other regions and an overall “national” identity vastly complicate our understanding of the ideological work of popular culture.¹⁸ Contexts of reception and various discourses and structures shape how and what a trade card could mean.

Furthermore, even if uniform reception were possible, the images of “the Orient” do not serve only as an Other. Thomas Kim argues that the Orient was a “fungible” concept that played a vital role in negotiating the modern U.S. consumer’s ambivalent attitude toward imperialism and consumerism. Rather than simply

constructing a premodern, faraway other, the notion of an Orient *in* close proximity was integral to creating modern consciousness, including consumerism and a critical attitude towards it. The ostensible aestheticism of the Orient licensed Westerners' consumption and control of Oriental things, while the figure of the devious Oriental overcome by his desire for beautiful things, usually white women, appealed to U.S. audience's anxieties about overconsumption. Thus, the Orient-as-concept functions by permeability between self and other, past and present, "here" and "over there," subject and object, and consumer and consumed. Rather than simply casting a uniform Other to a uniform Self – although they may apparently try to – the dialectics driven by anxieties and contradictions become constitutive of American identities. These dialectical tensions include the middle-classes' desire to distinguish itself from the lower and upper classes, despite also wanting to share some of their qualities; the attempts of the nation, post-Civil War, to define itself against slavery and for free labor; and the vain attempt of sexual and gendered regulation.

While the ostensible threat of Chinese labor was to the working class, trade cards such as Fig. 1 seemed to appeal to the middle class on the basis that the product would rid the nation of cheap labor. Other cards, however, used the figure of the Chinese laundry worker to embody middle-class values of economy, thrift, and convenience. In other words, the racial imaginary of the nation was malleable according to the exigencies of nationhood and business, or what David Harvey and G. Arrighi refer to as the competing logics of territory and capital.¹⁹ Particularly for the middle class, trade cards served multiple, complex functions.

As the twentieth century dawned, U.S. national culture increasingly centered on a growing middle class, differentiated from the working classes and immigrants as well as the decadent robber barons. Consumption, which played a central role in the middle-class's self-definition, was not a simple thing. It worked differently across class lines, and particularly for the middle class, consumption served as a mark of distinction. Around 1900, a millworker's family making around \$500 per year would only be able to purchase products for necessity, survival, and a "hard-won

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

decency,” while an engineer’s family, making around \$2,000 per year, would live with “distinction,” a “higher life” dictated not only by necessity but also respectability.²⁰ The growing professional-managerial class, comprised of “professionals, ‘petty proprietors,’ managers, and officials,” sought to define its identity and status,” thinking “more in terms of mobility and merit than in fixed lines and antagonisms.”²¹ In 1893, modern conveniences and brand-name products, such as “packaged cereal and crackers, canned vegetables and fish, packed meat, ketchup, [and] soft drinks,” were “distinguishing mark[s] of class” for such households.²² The desire for class distinction entwined with fear of the lower classes as unruly mobs. In the debate over Asian immigration, the working class was depicted as an ignorant racist mob; in the minds of the middle class that desired stability and a stable identity for itself, labor unrest was a boiling cauldron threatening to overflow.

Thomas Kim notes that while African and Native objects were shown at museums and collected by private collectors, Oriental art in middle-/upper-class homes stood as “exemplars of cultural refinement and the highest aesthetic aspirations.” He argues that these were not merely spectacles of the primitive or premodern, but signaled that the consumer had cultural capital in the form of “an education in beauty, an appreciation of ‘nature,’ and a training of the aesthetic sense”; in other words, “The Oriental object figured into a project of education and even uplift.”²³ The consumption and production of putative Oriental art, such as middle-class girls painting Oriental fans, was part of the growing modern middle-class self-definition through refinement and mobility. Images of an aestheticized, traditional, objectified Orient in trade cards functioned in even more divergent and unpredictable ways. Their appeal was based on the popularization of the notion that possessing Oriental objects and art constitutes a mark of high culture, yet their form hardly carried the same kind of cultural cachet as a piece of furnishing or a skill like painting fans. Trade cards were accessible to everyone. At the same time, the middle-class consumer could collect these trade cards as a sign of their upper-class taste. In essence, while the cards illustrate the ways in which elite taste-makers can shape popular culture, they also testify to the instability

of such racialized images.

At the same time, the middle class also wanted to distinguish itself from the decadent overconsumption of the robber baron class, in part through possession of those values like economy and thrift that it shared with the more acceptable elements of the working class. The middle class was engaged in a complicated dance of self-definition, in which identification and differentiation with the working and upper classes played a key role, and trade cards were a key form of currency in this system of ideological exchange.

Another part of this process was the ongoing negotiation between freedom and slavery. Moon-Ho Jung discusses how, after the Civil War, the discourse in which the figure of the coolie embodied slavery and was distinguished from free immigrants set the ground for 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.²⁴ This was also part of the U.S.'s self-definition as the defender of freedom, which in turn helped justify American imperialism in Southeast Asia. This project involved not only the casting out of the racial others, but also the anxious recognition of the continuation of slavery in a nation that increasingly defined itself in terms of freedom, despite its origins in slavery. This anxiety was distinct from the threat of "cheap Chinese labor," which ostensibly could be free but unwanted competition. Rather, the phenomenon Jung describes stems from what Miller calls the "coolie fiction," or the notion that all Chinese labor was enforced, which led lawmakers and others to oppose Chinese immigration.²⁵

Furthermore, several scholars have examined the ways in which Asian bodies, particularly male bodies, posed threatening ambiguities to the already-precarious constructions of regulated sexuality and gender.²⁶ The images in the trade cards play on the dialectic between regulated and "deviant" sexuality. Despite the power of sexual regulations, regulated sexuality can never really stay regulated because, like Simone de Beauvoir's woman, the subject insists on being an agent, even in fulfilling its prescribed role as object. The very fact that gender and sexuality are roles, as Judith Butler points out, destabilizes them even as they are embodied. So even as sexed, gendered, racialized national and class identity were formed through the figuration of others, this

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

very figuration testifies to the anxiety of those identities. The figure of the other may exhibit uncomfortable similarities that, of course, fuel the very need for those distinguishing acts.

In the following sections, I will examine the complex negotiations taking place in three themes of trade cards featuring Oriental images: the American, modern, technological innovation as “cleansing agent” (Figures 1 to 8); the “benign” images of domesticated Orientals and the benevolent American supernatural super-man (Figures 9 to 15); and the figures of the classic Orient, particularly in the form of nature and women (Figures 16 and 17).

Modernity as Cleansing Agent

As seen in the example of the collar advertisement, the invention of various technological advances, such as cold-handle irons and celluloid, waterproof linens, serve to rid the U.S. of “cheap Chinese labor.” One advertisement calls this “the handwriting on the wall” (Fig. 2). The product becomes the agent, enabling the various figures of the U.S. to banish unwanted immigrants. As Anne McClintock notes, the domestic commodity becomes not only the symbol of but also the *agent* of progress.²⁷ In her study of soap advertisements, she finds that white women and Africans “are figured not as historical agents but as frames for the commodity, valued for *exhibition* alone.”²⁸ At the same time, the scenario – in the advertisements as well as the in real life – is a strange one, as the ostensible competition between white American and Asian American workers would not have primarily been in the laundry business, but in the heavy industries. While it is true that, in the 1890s, active campaigns encouraged steam laundries at the expense of Chinese-owned hand laundries, American labor unions were not primarily concerned with these occupations.²⁹ These celluloid collars and new irons would alleviate the burden of domestic work and reduce the cost of laundering, but the rhetoric about cheap Chinese labor was that it would deprive American workers of jobs. However, American workers, particularly men, were not vying for laundry jobs; it was (and is) considered unpaid domestic labor. Not only does the cultural imperative of nativist racism take precedence over the realities of big business, Thomas

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Kim argues that this obscuring of material relations and histories in fact characterizes modernity.

The upset laundry worker in Figure 2 apparently shares the consternation of the workers in Figure 1. In this illustration, Columbia, bearing the shield of "Invention," points to the "handwriting on the wall" as well as the space outside the picture. The actual words on the wall read "No more Chinese cheap labor / Celluloid cuffs, collars & bosoms," while the caption at the bottom of the image interprets it as "Othello's occupation gone." In this ad, the actual product does not appear; rather, we have a triangulated relationship between Uncle Sam, Columbia, and the Chinese worker. Columbia, as the guardian of civilization and standard-bearer of progress must "cleanse" the unsavory elements, which in this ad as in Fig. 1, includes not only the Chinese laundry worker himself but also the disarray of his shop (the upturned basin as chair, the spilled box of starch, the overturned iron, the baggy clothing). Columbia and the Chinese laborer enact a scenario for a pleased Uncle Sam, gazing in through the window.

On one hand, this scene relegates the Orient to the past, outside the margins of modernity. At the same time, the figure of Uncle Sam in the background suggests that this "scene" helps constitute Americanness. American identity relies on an anxious dialectic between here/there, self/other, subject/object, and modern/primitive. The Chinese laundry worker lives *in* the U.S.; that fact, and the tensions arising from it, give rise to the caricature. Uncle Sam gazes lovingly at Columbia and possibly even identifies with her, but they are not the same person; there is a space of disidentification. Columbia indicates the "writing on the wall" for Uncle Sam as much as the laundry worker and the viewer.

Two additional considerations complicate this image. First is the vaguely "Oriental" lettering on the wall behind the laundry worker. This could also be read as the "handwriting on the wall" that means "Othello's occupation gone." If this is so, this suggests that the pleasure or appeal of the ad relies not only on the objective situation, but, as in Fig. 1, on the devastating realization of the laundry worker and perhaps even his writing his lamentations on the wall. This assumes not simply that he is a primitive other, but a

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

rational being who evidently understands the handwriting on the wall. Rather than simply othering the Chinese figure, this image shows him as a rational being who must accept the superiority of U.S. technology. Uncle Sam may so love Columbia because she provides the external justification for imperialism (technological superiority) for which he has been searching. We return again to the notion that the appeal of the ad plays a more complex role than simply banishing the other; a complex dialectic between sameness and differentiation is taking place. It suggests an acknowledgement, at some level, of the agency and voice of the writer, and at some levels, this rationality, agency, and ability are necessary to justify the superiority of the West.³⁰

Furthermore, the inscription identifies the Chinese laundry worker with Othello, Shakespeare’s hubristic Moorish king. The ad aligns the laundry worker with a non-white who not only aspires to power and greatness but *is* powerful and great, but who is destroyed by his pride and jealousy. Again, Othello is an “other,” but he also the figure of identification for the reader, moreso than Desdemona or Cassio. Again, the trade card works through subtle, simultaneous, and contradictory signals. While the text attempts “anchorage” to guide interpretation and meaning, slippage inevitably occurs.³¹ The image places a distance between the agent, the desired, and the other, but the process of reading the images also incorporates moments of an uncomfortable yet enjoyable recognition of sameness.

Figures 3 and 4 more overtly constitute American masculinity through not only the sheer inventive technology of these new celluloid collars, but also the tough-yet-stylish imperviousness to nature of this technology. In both figures, a Chinese figure looks on as a white man stands fully dressed in the water, demonstrating the waterproof feature of his new linens. Fig. 3 states, “No more washee washee – Melican man wear celluloid collar and cuffs.” Because the Chinese laundry workers’ services will no longer be necessary, in Fig. 3 the Chinese are “off for China.” In Fig. 4, a boat in the distance indicates more subtly the suggested route for the Chinese onlooker. Both these illustrations feature another triad, in which the gaze of the Chinese onlooker functions in tandem with

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

the gaze of another onlooker, an additional white man to the left who admires the celluloid-linen-wearing alpha male in the center of the picture. In Figure 3, the ancillary man points to the hearty “Melican man” that the Chinese worker, the viewer, and, judging from the pleased look on his face, he himself are supposed to register as the new epitome of manhood. In Fig. 4, the third man sits in contrast to the man in the center. Wearing an old-fashioned collar, he is short, rotund, wrinkled, and sweating; at the mercy of the elements, he carries a parasol. The effeminacy evoked by the parasol and the man’s corpulence connects him to the overconsumptive, effete upper class. In contrast, the central man wearing the economical and practical celluloid linen stands impervious to the elements. The ad helps construct middle-class American masculinity by contrasting it not only with the racialized other but also with the white man who lacks the practicality of celluloid linens and its attendant toughness.

Figures 5 and 6 likewise tie together bourgeois practicality, style, masculinity, and Americanness. On the front of the card, Fig. 5, a destitute man kneels on the floor before his drawers overflowing with dirty linens, while the Chinese laundry worker sits slightly above him on a stool. The caption reads, “Plenty dirtie shirtee / but john no washee more / tillee payee threely dollee / you owee john before.” On the reverse, shown in Fig. 6, the roles have changed. The white man is nattily dressed and standing tall; he has even gained another drawer in his bureau. The Chinese figure cowers before him, as he is told, “Look at this collar and these cuffs, John / You may well scowl and pout / Celluloid don’t need washing John / so take your cue and get out.” The pun on “cue” and “queue” conveys repulsion and satisfaction, but again, the image conveys ambivalent feelings about acquisition. On one hand, for the white male character, the product offers upward mobility; according to this trade card, being poor and being at the mercy of an Oriental are indignities compounding one another. On the other hand, the love of money, or the apparent greed of the Chinese figure, is portrayed as repellant. Upward mobility and the acquisition of money are essentially portrayed as two separate things. This licenses the flexibility and accumulation of middle-

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

class wealth by distancing it from crass greed.

Figures 7 and 8 also feature a product that rids the U.S., and an industrialized, commercially thriving California in particular, of hordes of indistinguishable Chinese. The Asian figures display the distinguishing characteristics shared by the other trade cards: long queues, slanted eyes and dramatic eyebrows, long fingernails, small, gender-ambiguous but invariably male bodies, identical loose shirts and baggy pants, slippers, and grimaces. Fig. 7 shows Uncle Sam being chased by a group of Chinese crying “stopee Melican Man!” The ad tells us that the “best way to get the Chinese back home” is to “take them Mrs. Potts sad irons.” California is depicted as a sprawling industrial center, while China is enclosed, backwards, and traditional. In Figure 8, Columbia wields a “new style” iron while a Chinese figure, holding an “old flat iron,” boards a boat labeled “For China Direct.” In both these instances, the cleansing agent of modern technology is needed to reinforce spatial and temporal boundaries that the presence of the Chinese into the U.S. has violated. These images construct the U.S. as much as the Chinese; both Uncle Sam and Columbia wields the new technologies that help distinguish them from the other.

Benign Orientals and Benevolent Super-national Supermen

In contrast to the images above, some advertisements portray benign images of Asians, both within the U.S. as well as outside the U.S. Particularly when Orientals are cast as representatives of their nation or part of the world, they become not only harmless but almost equivalent to other nations as one among many. At the same time, both these images of benignity and benevolence enable differentiating moves that justify U.S. superiority, in part (individuals, a class) or as a whole nation.

“Benign” images of Asians in the U.S. portray them as “domesticated,” in both senses of tamed as well as engaged in women’s work. The “benign” images offer no scenario of cleansing but rather appropriate the “Chinese” and Oriental into the fabric of American life, both in the content and form of the trade cards. I put “benign” in quotes because of course they are actually

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

patronizing, infantilizing, racist caricatures, and yet their intent is to reference positive qualities through these figures of the Chinese. The conflation of “Chinese” and “female” or “domestic” reappears in Figure 9, in which a gender-neutral Chinese and a white woman share a bonding moment over the joys of C.T. Reynolds Liquid Blue dye. The Chinese character is “genderless” because, while the text on the reverse side refers to “Housekeepers and *Laundresses*,” he/she exhibits the characteristics of male Chinese laborers, as in the ads discussed above. The woman is presumably a housekeeper and/or working-class laundress. The two figures, not dainty and refined but rather work-a-day and unglamorous, personify industry (as workers), familiar figures who know about the care of clothes, and this ad works by negotiating identification with and distinction from these figures. While the middle-class consumer presumably identifies with the expertise of these two figures, he/she could also see these figures as benign others.

Another image linking domestic work and Chinese labor appears in Figure 10, which advertises the sole sellers of “Rachel’s Enamel Bloom” in San Francisco (this image was also used to advertise a fine clothing and tailoring store in Philadelphia). The ad offers little logical or narrative connection between a Chinese laundry worker and the product, but the image connotes industry, hard work, and quality, or, as the text in Figure 1 puts it, “convenience, neatness, and economy.” This replaces the distaste for slovenly laundry workers with the sense of familiarity and comfort found in Fig. 9. Furthermore, in this advertisement, the text directly above the Chinese figure’s head reads “absolutely harmless.” Although this caption is supposed to refer to the product, it also reinforces the sense of safety and comfort with this figure. Interestingly, this particular image was copyrighted in 1882, the year of the first Chinese Exclusion Act, indicating the range of attitudes toward and discourses about Asian during that time. George Seward (1881), Otis Gibson (1881), and others argued at the time that Chinese labor was valuable and that Chinese ethics were compatible with American values. So the figure of the Chinese laundry worker was flexible enough to use for a variety of purposes.

Figures 11-13 also use cartoon-like situations involving the

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

classic laundry shop and queues, and the familiarity and flexibility as well as violence and darkness of these images recall folk figures like Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit. In Fig. 11, the Chinese workers dance around an enormous box of Lavine soap, like elves or leprechauns around a pot of gold. Here, the new product, instead of getting rid of the aliens, fills them with joy, presumably because their work has been made easier. Figures 12 and 13 also portray products that please the Chinese laundry workers because they make their job easier (as with the wringer) or simply because the products are so nice. In such cases, the middle-class viewer is supposed to identify with the elation of the Chinese figures, just as the reader or hearer of a folktale would ostensibly identify with the protagonist. But the images also elicit ambivalent, more complex responses.

The Chinese figures' queues are figures of fascination, miniature phalluses that are, first, exposed and therefore impotent, and second, apparently out of the owner's control. In Fig. 11, the queues stand erect because the dancing figures are happy, and in Fig. 12, the queue becomes useful, a line on which to hang drying shirts. But most disturbing is Fig. 13, in which, while the Chinese woman – one of the few depictions of women in the U.S. rather than in Asia – obviously reads a book, the Chinese laundry worker becomes entangled in the wringer. The technology that serves as the purifying sign of modernity in the previous section turns on the character who, in this narrative context, is supposed to benefit from it. Although the image does not invite identification – the figure is grotesque and the situation is painful – the English caption in the vaguely Oriental script at the top of the card invites the viewer to identify with the endangered figure. It reads, “Take a cue from the Chinaman and use Empire Wringers.” The slapstick haplessness of Chinese figure belies the ambivalence of the viewer's identification with the values of domestic economy and convenience and simultaneous distancing from the grotesque other. Such images also evoke the middle-class's equivocal attitude in distinguishing itself from the upper class by embracing the values of thrift, practicality, and hard work, all traits that skirt too closely to the honorable poor.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

While some images are “benign,” trade cards display most comfort with depictions of Asians *outside* the U.S. This ilk of image usually involves not only the Chinese but “representatives” of other nations, who demonstrate awe not only at the American product but also the American producer/distributor of that product. In these images, “the cult of the great man” prevails, implicitly justifying and even calling for American imperial power.³² In the attempts to create a “racial-national purity,” Figures 14 and 15 portray what Etienne Balibar calls “the (super-) national man.”³³ The figure speaks to the impossibility of keeping nationalist discourses within a purely national framework, and we see again that American superiority must arise from distinction with other nations, but their supposed equivalence as nations must enable this comparison in the first place.

The notion of the “great man” among a league of nations figures clearly in Figures 14 and 15, in which the icon of American nationalism, the ultimate “great man” himself, Uncle Sam, is “Supplying The World” with architectural finishes and agricultural tools. The text serves fairly straightforwardly as “anchorage” of interpretation: this is no angry international mob, but a docile, grateful group of stereotypical cultural representatives living under (literally, because Uncle Sam is at least a foot taller than anyone else) the capitalist, imperialist munificence of the U.S. In both these images, the “great man” illustrates the justification and even necessity for the world reign not only of the American state but also of American business.

Along similar lines, the Magnolia Hams series of trade cards utilized nearly every possible racial stereotype, American and international. In another trade card for Magnolia Hams (not pictured), the familiarly queued Chinese figure, now safely in China, bows and places a dead rat at the feet of the white, Western capitalist planted complacently in the center of the picture.³⁴ The text reads, “That is a plump rat, Chang Whang, but excuse me, I always carry Magnolia Hams.” This trade card portrays the Western Man as coming to liberate the Orient from the dirty, diseased rats overflowing out of the plates and pockets of the Chinese. He brings civilization, modernity, cleanliness, and technological advances,

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

while in the background, a parade of international figures carry the product, Magnolia Hams, suggesting that this American man has already conquered other parts of the world and its denizens and now they serve him *and* his commodity.

Although national representatives are usually male, in other trade cards, universal amazement also applies to women and even babies. Again, the dialectic of sameness and difference articulates identity and the boundaries it requires. Such clear marks of certain kinds of difference, particularly the demarcation of boundaries between nations and the assertion of U.S. superiority in technological ability, provide safe ground for acknowledgement of some kinds of sameness among people – the need for certain products – that will in turn provide justification for the expanding global market.

Classic Orient, Classy American

While Robert Jay finds that images of the Japanese were used to sell luxury items, images of the classic Orient actually vary. Certainly, in general, images of Asians in the U.S. at that time take the form of caricatured Chinese laborers, while romanticized pictures of the Orient, particularly of Japanese women, are cast in the past, removed from the viewer by space and time. Yet exceptions arise, many of which still conform to T. Kim’s observation that the Orient is portrayed as close to nature, simplicity, and beauty. For example, one trade card (not pictured), an Oriental child watches a bug pull a cart; this childlike picturesque advertises “Embroideries, Laces, White Goods, Real and Nottingham Lace Curtains, &c.” The image ostensibly has nothing to do with the product – these are not Asian goods – but rather draws on the cultural appeal of the Orient as aesthetic. This appeal applies both to the products, luxury items marking social class, as well as to the collectible trade card itself. At the same time, Fig. 10 above, the happily ironing Chinese laundry worker, was used to sell luxury items; the same 1882 image was also used to sell “Fine Clothing and Tailoring” in Philadelphia.

Products associated with and ostensibly from Asia also draw on images of the Orient. Stanton Teas, based in Norwich, Connecticut, featured a series of trade cards in 1877 that depicted China as a

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

land of simplicity and naturalness. In one card pictured in Fig. 16, a fruit vendor is attacked by a dog and upsets his cart. In another card, a dog has apparently caught an unfortunate person up a tree, while a complacent friend comes to his aid. Two other images depict fishermen in similarly simple, rustic settings. Such cards resolve the attraction of the rustic peasant figures by casting them into the past. The proximity of class, in other words, is negotiated by distance in terms of time and space.

Similarly, Syracuse-based C.H. Remer also uses a series of trade cards to advertise its product, "Japan and China tea store." The images show vaguely Chinese and Japanese figures making tea, "going to the tea party," and drinking tea. Figure 17 epitomizes the aestheticized, feminine, submissive Orient; the image itself takes the form of an Oriental scroll, and it is labeled "A Japanese Offering," which presumably encompasses the tea, the woman, and Asia itself. Images of Japanese women in traditional dress were also used to sell flowers, soap, and other luxury items. Since the forcible opening of Japan by the U.S. in the 1850s, Americans were fascinated with Japanese culture as a kind of pristine example of the Oriental traditional past. Gilbert and Sullivan's play "The Mikado" was extremely popular in the U.S. in the 1880s, while in the early twentieth century, the literary works of Otono Watanna (Winnifred Eaton) were much more popular than those of her sister, Sui Sui Far (Edith Maud Eaton).

But such images of the feminized Orient also served to define American womanhood. Mari Yoshihara notes that *Madame Butterfly's* tragic heroine Cio-Cio-San was played by white actresses who embodied American womanhood much more than Japanese femininity.³⁵ One trade card (not pictured), featuring "Yum Yum," is one of a series of New York trade cards for Mack publishing, which touts a new book containing "the complete words and music of the most beautiful songs of the Mikado," as well as two pharmacies: R. H. McDonald Drug Company and The Royal Pharmaceutical Company. Images of a white actress in the role of "Yum Yum" were also used to sell soap.³⁶ That the women in the images are obviously white suggests the role that such images played as large a role in creating American middle-class femininity. Such trade card

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

images resolve tensions between the familiar and the exotic, the Western and Oriental, the feminine Oriental other and American femininity to license certain kinds of roles and values. The Orient constituted symbolic capital but only as wielded by white middle-class American femininity, *not* as actually constituted by Asian Americans.

The objectives of such trade cards were many and multifaceted. Most obviously, their purpose was to sell products, including the trade cards themselves by printing companies. As such, the cards participate in the increasing infiltration of the commercial into the domestic sphere and “private” spaces (resulting in the practical saturation that we experience today). But like much ephemera, the cards were also a means for Americans to reflect themselves symbolically *to* themselves. Such everyday objects function “indirectly” because they fold into their foremost ostensible purpose – advertising products and services – multiple, not always coherent functions. The new technology and expanding markets enabling the dissemination of these kinds of advertisements coincided with the expanding middle class’s project of defining itself. These relatively mundane trade cards served as symbolic currency in the middle-class negotiation of self-determination against the lower and upper classes, even as they participated in the institutional and symbolic circumscriptions of life for Asian Americans. The cards were also part of a larger symbolic field in which Americans – again, particularly middle-class ones – resolved tensions about modernity and primitiveness, equality and hierarchy, and sameness and otherness.

That the trade cards were pitched primarily to middle-class Americans suggests that the middle class’ response to racial others was distinct from that of the upper and lower classes. Certainly, most classes shared some form of xenophobia and anxiety about sexuality. But overall, the middle class was not more or less racist but often both – or rather, the middle class’s construction of race could be distinguished from others. Due to their intermediary and uncertain position, the middle class had a stronger desire to distinguish itself *both* from Asians *and* other Americans, as suggested in Fig. 3 and 4. At the same time, foreshadowing the

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

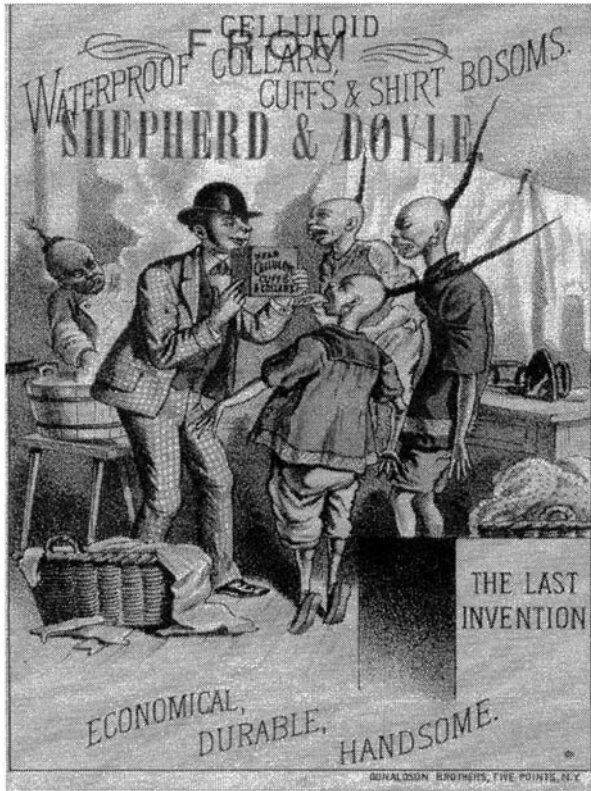
“model minority” myth of the late twentieth century, those others could be attributed with shared values of identification of thrift and work ethic, as demonstrated in Fig. 9 and 10. The middle-class’ relation to Asians, in fact, was often contrasted with what was seen as lower-class brutality against immigrants. As Fig. 14 and 15 demonstrate, it was acceptable to recognize Asians as one among a number of nations with similar needs, but this acknowledgement depended on the simultaneous demarcation of these others as primitive, separate, and distanced. Trade cards were thus part of the system of “visual regulation” of immigrants that Anna Pegler-Gordon notes became crucial in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,³⁷ but they were also central to the various dialectical negotiations involved in the American middle-class’s creation of *itself*.

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

“THE DIALECTICS OF ‘ORIENTAL’ IMAGES IN AMERICAN TRADE CARDS”

TRADE CARD IMAGES

Fig. 1 Trade Card Collection, #4524. Courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.



Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Fig. 2 Warsaw Collection of Business Americana – Men’s Clothing, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

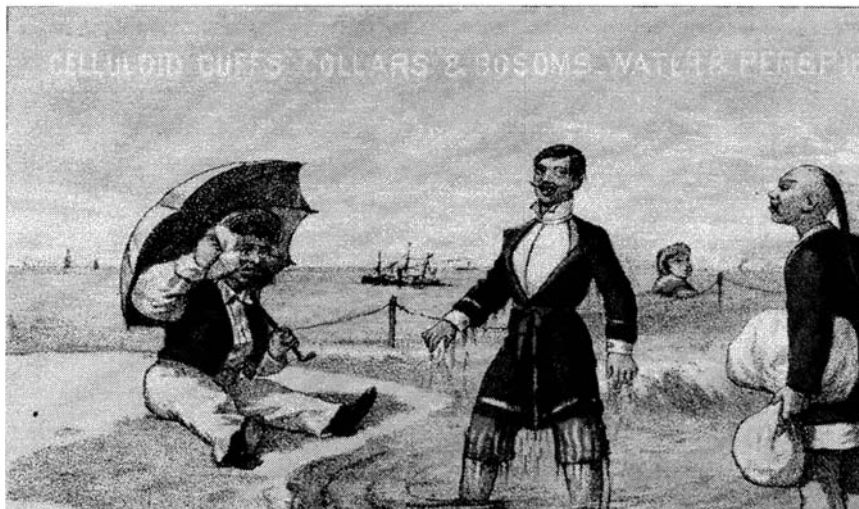


Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

Fig. 3 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Men’s Clothing, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Fig. 4 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Men’s Clothing, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Fig. 5 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Men's Clothing, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Fig. 6 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Men's Clothing, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

Fig. 7 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Laundry, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

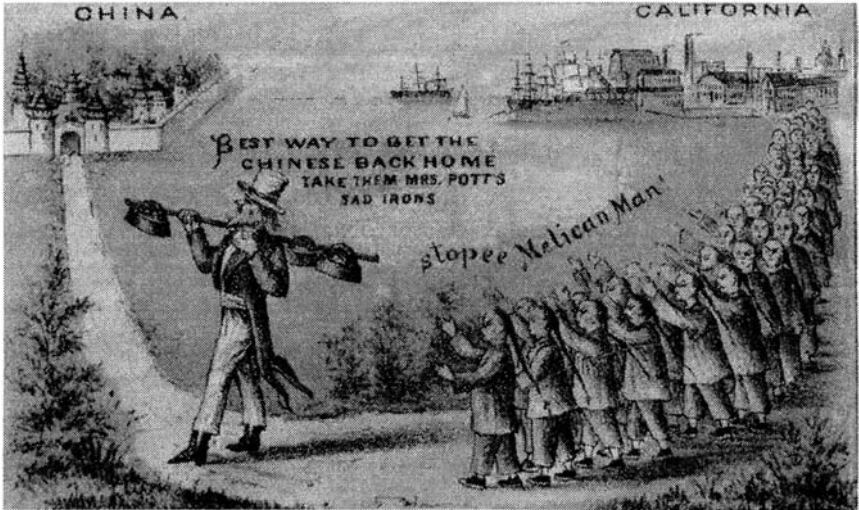


Fig. 8 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Laundry, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Fig. 9 Trade Card Collection, #4524. Courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.



Fig. 10 Warsaw Collection of Business Americana – Cosmetics, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Kim-Dialectic of "Oriental" Images

Fig. 11 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Soap, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Fig. 12 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Men's Clothing, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Fig. 13 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Laundry, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

Fig. 14 *Warsaw Collection of Business Americana - Agriculture, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution*



Fig. 15 *Trade Card Collection, #4524. Courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.*



Fig. 16 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Tea, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Fig. 17 Warshaw Collection of Business Americana – Tea, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Notes

1 All trade card images are used by permission of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY, and the Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. I would like to thank Mary White for her assistance with this project.

2 A note on terminology: In this essay, I will use the term “Orientals” and “the Orient” to refer to the generalized conception of Asian, “Chinese” for images of Chinese, “Japanese” for images of Japanese, understanding that in my discussion, these terms refer to signs, not the actual Asian Americans who, nevertheless, had and have to negotiate these signs.

3 Thomas W. Kim, “Being Modern: The Circulation of Oriental Objects,” *American Quarterly* 58.2 (June 2006), 385-6.

4 Robert Jay, *The Trade Card in Nineteenth-Century America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 74.

5 M. Thomas Inge, ed., *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (New York: Greenwood, 1989), 4-11.

6 J. Worth Estes, “Selling Massachusetts Medicines,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 14.2 (1986): 123. Estes discusses the role trade cards for patent medicines played in the enactment of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, another indication of the social significance of these little items.

7 Jay, 34-37. Other forms of media, such as newspaper and magazines, included advertisements but were limited to black and white images, and set restrictions on space and product. For example, many publications would not advertise beer and liquor, and advertisements were placed in the back section of the publications.

8 *Ibid.*, 1. This also coincides with the work of a number of scholars who have debunked the notion that anti-Asian sentiment during the late nineteenth century arose primarily from the working classes in California. The construction of “the Oriental” in the West preceded significant immigration of Asians to the West, was a national phenomenon, and was manipulated – like all images in advertising – according to the geopolitical and economic needs of the moment. See Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams* (Seattle: U of Washington, 1994); Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882* (Berkeley: U of California, 1969); and Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement of California* (Berkeley: U of California, 1971). Gary Okihiro provides a delineation of attitudes towards Asian immigration in *The Columbia Guide to Asian American History* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001).

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

- 9 Ibid., 3. For more general information on the history of trade cards, see Ambrose Heal, *London Tradesmen's Cards: An Account of Their Origins and Use* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1925); Bella C. Landauer, *Early American Trade Cards* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1927); Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (London: Verso, 1996); and Maurice Rickards and Michael Twyman, eds., *Encyclopedia of Ephemera* (London: The British Library, 2000).
- 10 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 213.
- 11 Ibid., 209.
- 12 Ibid., 5.
- 13 Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Politics* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996), 176.
- 14 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, Ed. Hannah Arendt, Trans. Harry Zohn (1955; New York: Schocken Books, 1968).
- 15 Elizabeth Kim, "Race Sells: Racialized Trade Cards in 18th-Century Britain," *Journal of Material Culture* 7.2 (July 2002): 137-165.
- 16 Ohmann, 264.
- 17 Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions: Literature, Advertisement, and Social Reading* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): 16.
- 18 Linda Frost, *Never One Nation: Freaks, Savages, and Whiteness in U.S. Popular Culture, 1850-1877* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
- 19 David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), chapter 2; Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of our Times* (London: Verso, 1994), 33-34.
- 20 Ohmann, 170.
- 21 Ibid., 167-8, 171-2.
- 22 Ibid., 167.
- 23 T. Kim, 387.
- 24 Moon-Ho Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of

Kim–Dialectic of “Oriental” Images

Emancipation,” *American Quarterly* 57.3 (Sept. 2005): 677-701.

25 Miller, 191-192.

26 See Gary Okiihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: U of Washington, 1994) 3, 25-6; Okiihiro, “Reading Asian Bodies, Reading Anxieties,” lecture, Ethnic Studies Colloquium, University of California, San Diego (Nov. 2, 1995); David Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham: Duke UP, 2001); Paul Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation*, Ed. John Kuo Wei Tchen (New York: New York UP, 1987); and, more in the twentieth-century, Nayan Shah, “Between ‘Oriental Depravity’ and ‘Natural Degenerates’: Spatial Borderlands and the Making of Ordinary Americans,” *American Quarterly* 57.3 (Sept. 2005): 703-725; and Jay Geller, “Judenzopf/Chinesenzopf: Of Jews and queues,” *positions* 2.3 (Winter 1994): 500-538.

27 McClintock, 220.

28 Ibid., 223.

29 Rose Hum Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region* (1947; New York: Arno, 1978).

30 But like the writing on the walls at Angel Island, this Chinese worker’s writing remains mysterious and unread.

31 Roland Barthes famously theorized the ideological work of image and text in interplay in “Rhetoric of the Image.” Barthes argues that the language of images consists of “idiolects, lexicons and sub-codes,” and “the image is penetrated through and through by the system of meaning” (47). Images are “polysemous,” i.e. “they imply, underlying their signifiers, a ‘floating chain of signifieds,’ the reader able to choose some and ignore others” (47). Text guides interpretation of images, “constituting a kind of vice which holds the connoted meanings from proliferating” (39). He identifies two functions at work in a text: anchorage and relay. Anchorage “directs the reader through the signifieds of the image...by means of a subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance” (40-1). At this level, “morality and ideology of a society are above all invested.” In relay, “text...and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words...are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level”; for example, comic strips function through relay (40-1). Barthes, Roland, “Rhetoric of the Image,” *Image, Music, Text*, Trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977): 32-51.

32 Ohmann, 345.

33 Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, Trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1977), 61.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

34 This trade card is not pictured because the original has – alas! – gone missing from the Kroch Library Archives Trade Card collection.

35 Mari Yoshihara, "The Flight of the Japanese Butterfly: Orientalism, Nationalism, and Performances of Japanese Womanhood," *American Quarterly* 56.4 (Dec. 2004): 975-1001.

36 Ohmann, 74.

37 Anne Pegler-Gordon, "Chinese Exclusion, Photography, and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy," *American Quarterly* 58.1 (March 2006): 51-77.

**USE OF MULTIPLE METHODS:
AN EXAMINATION OF CONSTRAINTS
EFFECTING ETHNIC MINORITY VISITOR
USE OF NATIONAL PARKS AND
MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

**Nina S. Roberts
San Francisco State University**

**Donald A. Rodriguez
California State University, Channel Islands**

Understanding outdoor recreation participation and national park visitation by members of ethnic minority groups has been a particular focus of outdoor recreation researchers for the past twenty years. Attracting ethnic minorities, and understanding their recreation needs and interests, demands a multi-faceted approach and sustained commitment not only by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) but by other resource management agencies as well.

The world has changed profoundly since the first national parks were created and the national park “idea” continues to provide benefits of fundamental importance to this country. Yet, despite the inspiration provided and uplifting of our spirits, there are unmet recreational needs and opportunities unfulfilled. Furthermore, as the complexion of the nation changes, our experiences as a people

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

are also undeniably becoming more diverse. The future of the NPS may well be tied to the changing demographics of the country, in general, and the American West in particular. Empirical research on outdoor recreation experiences of ethnic minorities and national parks is on the rise yet still remains largely unexplored.

According to Machlis and Field (2000), “while the ‘average visitor’ has never existed, the diversity of visitors is likely to increase further in the next decade” (p. 7). This will serve to widen the gap among the visiting public regarding interpretation, communication, and management direction. We recognize that the ethnic diversity of visitors is likely to increase, bringing new recreation styles, uses, and needs to national parks and their bordering gateway communities. Furthermore, investigating the attitudes, perceptions and outdoor recreation experiences of ethnic minorities and national parks has received little research attention from an empirical standpoint (e.g., Floyd, 1999; Hutchison, 2000; Sasidharan, 2002; Solop, Hagen, & Ostergren, D., 2003).

Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) in Colorado, receives over three million visitors annually. Although various diversity initiatives have achieved some notable successes (e.g., outreach to Denver-based youth groups), ethnic minorities and individuals from low income backgrounds are still underrepresented in outdoor recreation participation at RMNP. This study explores why this might be the case.

Terms and Nomenclature

Racial terms are sometimes problematic because of their imprecise social, cultural and geographic meaning. Language among racial and ethnic groups evolves over time and terms change with societal events and influences. The term “African American” has been in common usage in the parks and recreation literature. Also popular in this field is use of the term “Black”. This article respectfully uses both of these terms interchangeably to be more inclusive, to not assume the meaning or connotation associated with each, and because respondents in this study self-identified using either one term or the other. Second, the generic term “Hispanic” was officially created by the U.S. Census Bureau

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

in 1970 to designate people of Spanish origin; this is considered “inaccurate, incorrect, and often offensive” as used for all Spanish-speaking people or Latinos (Comas-Díaz, 2001).

Despite classification by the U.S. Census Bureau, individuals whose heritage is from Central, South or Latin America, and even Caribbean groups such as Cubans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans, have “Latino” as their least common denominator and, according to Comas-Díaz (2001) is the preferred name of these populations. As a result of the predominant Mexican/Mexican American (e.g., *Chicano*) community in Colorado this paper uses the term “Latino(s)” from this point forward in general content, not including Census Bureau references that still includes use of “Hispanic” (U.S. Census, 2004).

Review of literature

Race, ethnicity, and culture

There are several reviews of literature on the topic of ethnicity/race in parks and recreation (e.g., Allison, 1988; Johnson, Bowker, English & Worthen, 1997; Floyd, 1999; Gómez, 2007; Gómez, 2003; Gramann & Allison, 1999; Hutchison, 2000; Sasidharan, 2002; Shinew, et al., 2006), and outdoor recreation specific experiences (Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002). The concepts of race, ethnicity, and culture have come to the forefront of social science and natural resource management over the last several years to address growing issues of diversity of outdoor recreation users of public lands. Debates about the role of ethnicity and culture have sparked a movement towards research that is directly applicable to social issues relating to natural resource management. For instance, topics such as attitudes, preferences, participation patterns and styles, constraints, “meaning” (e.g., nature, experiences), and general recreation behavior associated with diverse racial/ethnic groups have seen a large rise in funding for both research and specialized training for public land agency managers.

Understanding race, ethnicity and constraints relating to outdoor recreation and park use

In general, issues surrounding race or ethnicity and constraints to recreation participation have not been given the attention they

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

deserve (Jackson, 2005; Phillip, 1995; Shinew, Floyd & Parry 2004; Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002). Studies that do exist suggest that typical constraint models need refinement, given their lack of consideration for racial issues. According to a variety of scholars in the field of parks and recreation, further studies are needed to examine how race or ethnicity and constraints to recreation participation as well as park use are truly interrelated (Arnold & Shinew, 1998; Gobster, 1993; Parry, Shinew & Arnold, 2001; Phillip, 1995; Shores, Scott, & Floyd, 2007).

In his comprehensive review on race/ethnicity and use of the National Park System, Floyd (1999) reported different ethnic groups' exhibit various rates of visiting national parks as well as recreation activity participation. Groups studied show variation in both style of use and overall experiences. For example, from years of documented studies, Whites are known to visit national parks at higher proportions than any other racial group. Furthermore, while similarities and differences are reported among all users (e.g., Latino and Asian American appear more similar in activity participation; Blacks less likely to venture out into the wilderness), ethnic minority visitors are more likely to report experiences with discrimination (perceived or real) during their visits than Whites (including higher reports by Blacks than any other group). Following this structured and influential review related to racial and ethnic minority use of national parks, Floyd's emphasis for future research needs suggested consideration for "the role of discrimination in minority decisions regarding park use has not received adequate research attention" (Floyd, 1999, p. 18).

Recent literature addressing the topic of national park visitation and constraints to use includes a national study commissioned by the NPS Social Science Program with Northern Arizona University. Solop, et al. (2003), conducted a survey of 3515 households in 2000 of which 32% of respondents reported visiting a national park within the last two years. They found that Hispanic Americans and African Americans were more likely than Whites to identify the overall costs, lack of information and travel distance as constraints to park visitation. African Americans were more than three times as likely as Whites to believe that park employees gave poor service to visitors, and that parks were uncomfortable places to be for

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

people similar to themselves. Additionally, Hispanic Americans were concerned about making a camping reservation too far in advance and were twice as likely then Whites to be concerned about personal safety.

Johnson, Bowker, and Cordell (2001) examined the specific role of race, gender, and urban residence and found of those three factors, gender was a significant predictor of constraints for the participants. Women identified concerns about personal safety, inadequate facilities and information, insufficient funds, and outdoor pests. While race was not a significant predictor, however, African Americans were much more likely than whites to feel inhibited by personal safety concerns. Urban residence did not appear to be an important factor to outdoor recreation participation according to this study.

Shinew et al., (2004) found African Americans have become more accustomed to negotiating constraints, and thus have developed strategies of resistance to empower themselves in life (in general) and in desires for recreation, specifically. Their study also indicated that African Americans report a lower preference for nature based activities than Caucasians, which is consistent with much of the literature.

Floyd (2001) explored several hypotheses used to explain primary issues of access and use including the construct of *discrimination* which is segmented in two key components. First, *interpersonal discrimination* relates to “actions carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have differential and negative impacts on members of minority groups” (Feagin, 1991 in Floyd 2001, p. 47). Second, *institutional discrimination* “focuses on the ‘behavior’ of organizations, bureaucracies, or corporate entities. This hypothesis assumes discriminatory practices are embedded in the structure, policies, or procedures of organizations” (Floyd, 2001, p. 49). He concludes by reiterating the NPS mandate to serve the American public and the rationale to find common ground with the people it serves.

Finally, Roberts (2007) engaged nearly 100 ethnic minorities around the Bay Area regarding use or non-use of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Using a focus group technique, self-identified Blacks, Latinos and Asians were interviewed about

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

both onsite experiences with visiting GGNRA as well as exploring constraints if they have never been. First, from a values standpoint, findings revealed that the majority of the individuals interviewed care deeply about parks and natural resource issues. Many people, however, expressed not knowing how these resources are managed or by whom. This reflects a communications gap between certain ethnic groups and the GGNRA. Second, regarding constraints, the following five broad categories emerged from the data across ethnic groups: *Access issues* (transportation, associated costs, safety, and fear); *communication* (language issues, signage, printed brochures/materials not always available or known that they exist); *lack of knowledge, experience, and awareness* (where to go or what to do); *representation* (lack of ethnic minorities on staff/workforce diversity, lack of awareness of, or questioning, recruitment and hiring practices), and *discrimination, cultural differences, and perceived prejudice*.

Rocky Mountain National Park and Study Purpose

Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) was established in 1915 and consists of more than 265 thousand acres of which the majority is considered wilderness. It represents a high mountainous environment (up to 14,000 ft in elevation at its highest peak) with over three million visitors each year. Home to diverse plant and wildlife species, the park also prides itself on its interpretive programs designed to educate the general public about the rugged yet fragile ecosystems.

The purpose of this study was to obtain information about recreation participation and non-participation at Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) from African American and Latino residents of the State of Colorado, as well as a national panel of minority natural resource professionals. This occurred through an examination of various constraints as well as effect of perceived discrimination impacting ethnic minority visitation or non-use of national parks, in general. A supplemental aspect was to explore general outdoor recreation patterns, understand the “meaning of nature”, and attitudes towards visitor services. This study involved a mixed-method approach and was guided by four primary research questions:

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

1. What do ethnic minority resource professionals believe are the most salient issues relating to national park visitation of under-represented groups?
2. What types of experiences and activities are desired from travel to RMNP by African Americans and Latinos, residing along the Colorado Front Range?
3. How do African American and Latino visitors and non-visitors compare regarding reported constraints to park visitation?
4. What influence do ethnicity, culture, gender, and class have on constraints to participation?

Conceptual Framework

Constraints theory is the primary framework guiding this study and the construct of discrimination was explored as a valuable factor providing necessary support. Constraints theory is based on much of the work by Jackson and colleagues and is noted in one aspect of their research:

“...there exists a cohesive body of knowledge that has developed rationally and progressively over the last two to three decades. The conceptual dimensions of the phenomenon have been outlined, theory-based models have been constructed, and there has been some empirical investigation and verification of propositions and hypotheses arising from these models” (Jackson & Scott, 1999, p. 311).

Constraints research in the field of parks and recreation was originally conceptualized in the 1980s as a mechanism for better understanding barriers to activity participation (Jackson, 2005; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) identified three primary types of barriers: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. According to the authors intrapersonal barriers reflect psychological states and individual attributes such as stress, anxiety, depression, and socialization into (or away from) specific activities. Interpersonal barriers involve the interactions and relationships between individuals such as the inability to locate a suitable partner for a backpacking trip. Structural barriers are factors which intervene between preferences or choices and actual participation. Examples of structural barriers might include having adequate financial resources, available time, suitable climate, or even institutional considerations.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

From a management perspective, research to date has only just begun to provide sufficient information as to what specific strategies might minimize constraints to participation (i.e., within managers' power and jurisdiction) (Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2005). Not only has there been a lack of ethnic diversity in natural resource management personnel, there has been a proportionate lack of interest in understanding the influence cultural diversity exerts in resource values and use (Schelhas, 2002). Scholars must extend the application of constraint theory to incorporate the perspectives of non-traditional visitors if park leadership is to understand those factors that limit their participation.

Results of the current study move beyond the boundaries of the traditional constraints theory, hierarchical notions, or even constraints negotiation to reach a deeper understanding in relationship to different ethnic groups. Constraints relating to parks use can, indeed, help us understand differences in outdoor recreation behavior between subgroups of our society and broader contextual variables that shape people's choices of what to do during their leisure time.

Realizing that constraints theories and hypothetical frameworks proposed thus far do not apply to everyone, this study investigates the intrapersonal, interpersonal and, to a lesser degree, structural constraints related to park visitation experienced by African Americans and Latinos in Colorado. Also, elements of perceived discrimination embedded in institutional practices and experiences of park visitors and minority resource professionals, were also considered as integral to this discussion of constraints. That is, it is essential to drive home the point that "perceived discrimination", an important intrapersonal constraint, has often been overlooked in past constraints research.

In the parks and recreation literature, the concept of *perceived discrimination* is defined as that which exerts a negative affect on visitation among racial and ethnic minorities whether real or alleged (Floyd, 1999). Two concepts connected with this approach of interest to this present study are *displacement* and *avoidance*. That is, ethnicity and race may be associated with "displacement" where a recreation area can develop a specific identity or reputation as a location

Roberts—Use of Multiple Methods

providing certain types of experiences cultural groups find desirable or undesirable. Avoidance suggests minority groups may avoid certain areas where they expect to experience discrimination (or some other undesirable behavior or condition) either from other visitors or park staff (Williams & Carr, 1993; Gramann 1991 cited in Gramann, 1996; Gramann & Floyd 1991 cited in Floyd, 1999). However, these concepts have rarely been linked to factors relating to ethnicity and culture in connection with inter- and intrapersonal constraints.

Additionally, the responses to discrimination (i.e., how this alters recreation behavior) have received less attention than the range of discrimination such as avoidance, exclusion, physical threats, or blatant attacks. Gramann (1996) and Floyd (1999) suggest that avoidance and displacement may be important variables in understanding the behavioral consequences of discrimination. Finally, understanding the type of constraints experienced by ethnic minority visitors and non-visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park may shed new light on the role of discrimination as a constraint to park visitation.

Methodology

This study explored constraints experienced by African American and Latino visitors and non-visitors to RMNP in particular, and to U.S. National Parks in general. Data were collected in two distinct phases that included a Delphi technique and focus groups. A total of 70 African Americans and Latinos participated in both phases of the study.

First developed in the 1950s, the Delphi has been one of the better known methods of studying current trends and forecasting the future (Baughman, 1985; Weatherman & Swenson, 1974). In its simplest form, the Delphi technique is “a group of related procedures for eliciting and refining the opinions of a group of people” (Weatherman & Swenson, 1974, p. 97). More specifically, the Delphi involves inviting a panel of experts in a particular field to respond to a questionnaire and make independent, knowledgeable judgments about the assigned topic or issue under investigation.

The few scholars that have used this technique in forestry planning, forest service recreation resource management and

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

environmental assessment, for instance, have substantiated the Delphi process as less expensive, more reliable, more versatile compared to other methods of soliciting group consensus, and a highly effective means of augmenting decision-making with useful information (e.g., Anderson & Schneider, 1993; Baughman, 1985; Clark & Stankey, 1991; Richey, Mar, & Horner, 1985).

While reaching consensus is the goal of this method, subsequent studies using this procedure support numerous iterations as long as the research team deems necessary (Anderson & Schneider, 1993; Baughman, 1985). In other words, a Delphi process could consist of two or three rounds without any real loss of information and the overall investigation could involve relatively minimal time for both the expert panel and research team members.

The Expert Panel: This phase involved professionals in the field of parks and recreation who attended a forum called "Black, Brown, and Green—Seeking Common Ground: A Dialogue by Latino and African American Leaders on Natural Resource Issues." This event was sponsored by the National Hispanic Environmental Council and the RoundTable Associates in October 1999.

The nature of this conference included a uniform mix of participants related to age, years in the field, and management and leadership experience. Furthermore, participants ("key informants") worked in six different settings adding to the strength of knowledge and customs of this group. That is, federal, state, municipal/city agency, nonprofit, private/for profit, and education institutions were represented. While none of the literature reviewed lent strong support to a particular panel size, according to Weatherman and Swenson (1974), the Delphi technique is typically used with groups of fifty or fewer participants. A "large scale Delphi" (lsD) consists of 100 or more. Central to the process is that invited candidates meet established criteria and those who agreed to participate were accepted.

All 40 attendees at this meeting were formally invited to participate in this study representing the target minority groups thereby providing an ideal panel to query. Based on the composition of this group and familiarity with Rocky Mountain National Park, it was agreed that this collection of experts would benefit the project as a whole by seeking their knowledge, perceptions, and experiences of ethnic minority

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

recreation in parks and natural areas from a broad perspective.

Study Procedures: This Delphi process consisted of three iterations: The initial open-ended questionnaire administration and two iterations of the results review. The series of questionnaires were distributed by electronic mail as preferred by the participants. This increased the momentum of transmitting information as well as efficiency of summarizing responses for each subsequent round. In the first round questionnaire, a simple open-ended question was used to elicit a list of outdoor recreation constraints as perceived by these ethnic minority leaders working in the field: *“From your point of view, what are the barriers and constraints experienced by ethnic minorities that limit their visitation to national parks?”*

Six focus groups were conducted, following the Delphi, with fifty-three individuals from African American and Latino backgrounds. These individuals participated in their respective racial groups together in order to maintain group cohesion and an enhanced level of comfort with potentially being more candid with their responses. A snowball sampling technique occurred with trusted and respected community leaders to ultimately form each focus group process that included between 9 and 15 participants. There were 34 females and 19 males ranging in age from 18 to 63. Spanish language translators were present for two of the Latino focus groups. A series of fifteen semi-structured questions set the foundation for the process. Table 1 depicts the primary categories of questions asked during the interviews. All focus group interviews were taped, transcribed, and coded for content.

Table 1. Categories guiding focus group questions for semi-structured interviews

- ✓ Activity enjoyment (e.g., what type of recreation do you pursue?)
- ✓ Value of nature / natural environment
- ✓ Comfort level (e.g., nature in general or RMNP specifically)
- ✓ Constraints to visiting RMNP
- ✓ Experiences with discrimination (perceived or real)
- ✓ Workforce diversity (e.g., “does it matter to you?”)
- ✓ Marketing/Public Relations – What works best?

Data Analysis

Delphi: The invitation was sent to 40 participants (“key informants”) and twenty-five responded with an affirmative “yes” to participate in this phase while only four gave a definitive “no.” To maximize involvement, the remaining 11 were included in correspondence unless they requested otherwise. After two follow-up reminders 14 (56%) responded to the initial question. The second questionnaire was sent and after two reminders, 17 (68%) completed round two. It was determined that a third and final round would occur. Important to note about this final round is that it took place right after the “9-11” tragedy in America resulting in a reduction of participants for obvious reasons. Two reminders were again sent resulting in 14 completed questionnaires (i.e., 56% response rate). Basic demographics for all respondents who contributed comments to the procedure are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Basic demographics of panelists contributing to the procedure

<p><u>Gender:</u> Males = 11; Females = 6</p>	<p><u>Position level:</u> Upper management/Executive = 9 Middle mgmt = 6 Field Staff = 1 Unknown = 1</p>
<p><u>Self-ascribed race:</u> Hispanic = 7 Black/African American = 7 Bi-racial* = 2 White = 1</p>	<p><u>Type of agency where employed:</u> Federal = 6 State = 1 Municipal/City Agency = 2 Non-Profit = 4 Private/For Profit = 2 Education institution = 2 (university; middle school)</p>

* White/Native American
Hispanic/Native American

Responses to the initial open-ended question were first used to elicit a list of outdoor recreation constraints: “From your point of view, what are the barriers and constraints experienced by ethnic minorities that limit their visitation to national parks?” Using a content analysis procedure, responses were organized and compiled

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

based on keyword associations and patterns that emerged from the aggregated data then ultimately grouped into ten categories. Based on the frequency of responses, these categories were considered the most prevalent ones for further analysis. Validity was achieved as each member of the research team completed this task on separate occasions, compared outcomes, and generally agreed on the meaning of the responses to formulate logical items used for the final list.

This resulting list of constraints was sent to participants a second time to determine the degree of agreement around items listed. In this second questionnaire, salience was an essential aspect to obtain for the analysis. Participants were asked to rank these ten categories according to what they believed were the most notable barriers/constraints to minority use and participation of national parks. The items were ranked from 1 to 10, with “1” being the most important reason related to the greatest depth of meaning or leading deterrent to participation and “10” being the lowest in not as strong a reason in this list of constraints. Additionally, we encouraged participants to provide feedback regarding whether they agreed or disagreed with the items as stated. For instance, of interest was whether these experts believed the items reflected their perceptions of what the constraints actually were. Responses were then computed by obtaining a mean rank for each category positioned by each person. Three classifications were developed based on the rank order of panelist responses (i.e., high, medium, and low salience). Because of the wide variety of opinions, experiences, and knowledge, the research team did not provide panelists with further rankings for the third round rather included these groups as “clusters” that resulted from calculating their ranks of each of the ten items.

Focus Groups: A constant comparative technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and analytic induction were used as tools for analysis. The data were analyzed in two primary ways: Interviews were first coded using descriptive codes derived from the interview questions. Second, interviews were then coded by emerging patterns, themes and categories as part of the movement from data description to conceptual clarification. Coding for content and emerging

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

themes occurred via eight major topics: 1) Value of nature/natural environment; 2) Familiarity with NPS and specific travel/visits to RMNP; 3) Activity interests (e.g., included probes about ranger-led programs and/or visitor centers); 4) Barriers/constraints to visiting RMNP; 5) Experiences of “fear” or concerns either while at the park or as possible constraints to visiting (includes discrimination as an inquiring factor); 6) Comfort level (e.g., nature in general or RMNP in particular); 7) Marketing issues; and 8) Workforce diversity from a very broad stance (e.g., “does it matter to you?”). Based on the focus group structure for this study, no effort was made to tease out the relative effects of gender, income, or marital status.

Finally, use of mixed-methods with minority users and non-users allowed the researchers to shed light on perspectives of constraints to participation, in general, as well as perceptions of discrimination in particular. Results of each method were compared, the researchers checked for consistency of findings across data sources, and common threads were noted and recorded.

Results and Findings

This primary focus of this study was to gather information about the perceptions and experiences of African Americans and Latinos pertaining to Rocky Mountain National Park. Understanding constraints and potential discrimination factors of these minority groups were at the core of this project.

First, corroborating with the literature (Dwyer, 1994; Jones, 1998; Parker & McDonough, 1999; Hutchison, 2000; Roberts, 2007; Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002), respondents in this study expressed high regard for outdoor recreation, strong values for parks, and genuine concern for the natural environment. There seems to be a persistent myth that ethnic minorities do not value the outdoors or related recreational activities (e.g., “we just don’t do that”). Instead, balance in nature and connecting with the “Creator” through special places are hallmarks of both African American and Latino lifestyles.

In general, nearly two-thirds of all respondents indicated understanding the values their culture places on the natural environment is very important. Similarly, more than half indicated

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

some positive level of interest in “learning about protecting nature” as an activity of interest in the next five years.

Second, these facets notwithstanding, constraints to participating in outdoor activities at RMNP still exist and perceptions of discrimination for not visiting the park were apparent but acts of discrimination were never blatant. More than eighteen years ago, West (1989) was the first to employ constructs of *uncomfortable/unwelcome* into his work in order to conceptualize variables related to cultural constraints. These variables were precursors to the present study when constraints were considered. Furthermore, West (1989) was the first to raise the issue of perceived geographic distance (subjective and objective) as a possible factor influencing park usage. This was an essential component in determining how much “distance” is truly a phenomenon of the *cultural map* based on the location of RMNP for minority residents of Colorado.

Results, as documented in these two phases, will focus on cumulative findings that are the result of a distillation of content analytical procedures. That is, qualitatively, content analysis, de-contextualization and re-contextualization (reduction and interpretation of data) occurred. Subsequently, by converging the cumulative results of these two data sets, the greatest overall judgments of the study are provided.

Phase I: Ten primary factors were distilled from the Delphi (Table 3).

Table 3. Categories developed and total rank per category for Delphi Results¹

Constraint Category²	Total Rank
1. Socialization as a child into outdoor recreation and exploring natural areas	54
2. Lack of marketing efforts towards minority communities	57
3. Culture of the National Park Service	65
4. Education about the outdoors.....	70
5. Marginalized nature of ethnic minority groups	86
6. Safety concerns.....	87

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

7. Lack of a range of opportunities for minority groups.....97
8. Perception among minority groups97
9. Historical context..... 109
10. Perceptions by whites that perceive these areas are
“their place” 11

¹ From round one 15 categories were initially identified and further analysis revealed five of the categories were similar enough to other categories to collapse the list into the top 10.

² The order of importance has an inverse relationship to the mean rank: The lowest total rank is equivalent to the most important, highest rated constraint by this panel. Perceived discrimination factors were found to be embedded in comments pertaining to lack of marketing, culture of the NPS, marginalization, safety concerns, historical context, and perceptions by whites.

Examples of interpersonal constraints resulting from this analysis of responses by the expert panel include socialization (e.g., cultural connections with others to the outdoors limited) as an example of an overall constraint for this level. Second, on an intrapersonal level it was noted that exposure to parks and natural areas during childhood is a constraint to participation as adults. As a structural constraint, the *culture of the National Park Service* was a primary category that surfaced as a variable of interest. Examples of messages include lack of marketing efforts towards ethnic minorities as a concern, lack of a range of opportunities for this population was brought up as an observation, and lack of ethnic minorities on staff was an issue for some respondents. Lack of education about the outdoors was also a strong response by Delphi participants.

Phase II: Table 4 reflects the key themes and their related meanings as distilled by the researchers from focus groups.

Table 4. Constraint Themes Resulting from African American and Latino Focus Groups

Theme	Meaning
Preference/convenience of city/local parks	Proximity to residence and/or neighborhood
Safety issues	Physical and/or emotional; fear; discomfort
Costs and transportation	Marginalized nature of ethnic minorities
Marketing and public relations	Lack of attention/consideration for minorities
Perceived discrimination	Someone exerting a negative effect on visitation
Socialization and exposure	Parental/family involvement as youth; culture
Lack of knowledge & awareness	Benefits of participation; opportunities; facilities
Historical context & perspectives	Effects of slavery; migrant labor; share croppers
Trust issues (“social permission”)	Peer pressure; lack of role models; disbelief

As noted in Table 3, many responses were similar to the results of the Delphi phase with the differences in the following areas: Intrapersonal constraints were noted as physical and emotional safety issues and fear while examples of constraints on an interpersonal level related to peer pressure, and lack of role models. Two structural constraints that were divergent to the panel of experts, perceived discrimination and historical contexts (e.g., effects of slavery and impact on contemporary leisure choices) were strong themes converging for focus group respondents.

Key findings from both phases: Taken together both methodological procedures (n=70 participants) point toward gender issues of high consideration in the reporting of constraints, and that respondent perceptions and experiences also cut across ethnicity and culture in varying degrees. While respondents in both phases mentioned varying socio-economic circumstances as constraints for some individuals, this variable was not specifically measured. Hence, data analyses reveal that gender was a primary

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

demographic variable that may be more likely to influence what level or impact of consideration and salience the constraints have on individual perceptions and experiences with constraints to participation in outdoor recreation in natural areas in general or RMNP in particular.

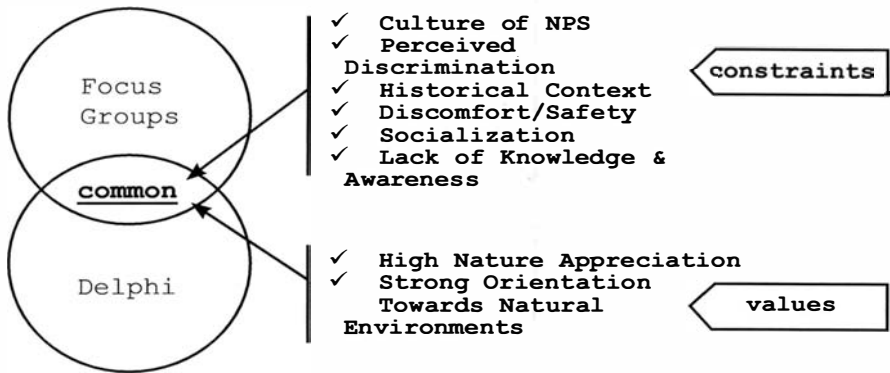
Respondents in both phases indicated gender roles seem to play a large part in the opinions or way of thinking about the outdoors and natural resources. Examples include involvement because of husband or male companion, concerns about daughters being outdoors, issues with hair and activities where women/girls would get dirty, and when participating women – in some cases – would remain “close to camp to watch the children and/or cook the meals”.

While “lack of transportation” (or reliable transportation) was a concern for people at some level, overall results also show that decisions to visit RMNP move beyond merely focusing on this issue (e.g., marginality) to the influence of cultural values and perceived discrimination regarding perceptions of the park or desire to visit. Consequently, the common ground in the results of both methods includes the following constraint dimensions.

- 1) Intrapersonal: Lack of knowledge of the benefits of visiting or participation regarding programs/activities (e.g., “what to do there”) and exposure as a child.
- 2) Interpersonal: Personal discomfort/safety issues and socialization (e.g., “not part of my culture”).
- 3) Structural: Culture of the National Park Service (including lack of ethnic minorities in the workforce), perceived discrimination, and historical contexts.

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

Figure 1. The company of common factors among both methods ¹



¹ Total participants; $n = 70$

There were numerous responses to questions asked about discomfort and safety that surfaced in the focus group interviews and Delphi process. These variables related to aspects of fear of the unknown, do not like bugs/wildlife, heard stories that “bad things have happened to people like me” at RMNP or other similar natural areas. Two other comments made were: “*I personally have no inferior thoughts on race issues, I just enjoy*” and “*Not a people issue, it’s an uninvited animal safety issue.*” On the other hand, two comments offer a contrasting perspective for why they would not feel safe at RMNP regarding other people as constraints:

I would use the term ‘yokels’ or ‘rednecks’ – other categories are prejudiced, white middle-class to bigoted upper ‘Anglo’ class people.

[African American male]

The rangers or other personnel assume I am there to cause trouble.

[Latina female]

There was an overall concurrence among respondents in both phases that lack of knowledge and awareness was a strong consideration for under-representation in park visitation. For

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

example, individuals noted they did not know anything about RMNP, or what the opportunities are, for why they would want to visit. *How would I benefit?* was a common question asked by many focus group respondents. Comments made by key informants in the Delphi phase regarding the publics' lack of information were consistent with focus group participants such as lack of knowledge regarding the national park system and mission as well as the role of ethnic minorities in shaping the NPS over the years (e.g., early African American rangers, Buffalo Soldiers, Smoke Jumpers). Additionally, remarks included uncertainty about the opportunities at RMNP and other national parks as an issue.

The theme of socialization issues in both phases varied from childhood upbringing to trust issues and the need for "social permission" from members of one's community and peers. Individuals in both the focus groups and Delphi agreed that early childhood exposure to national parks is central to educating children about the parks and developing an interest and support in the future. This may or may not occur in family settings. Outdoor recreation is clearly very much a cultural norm; part of what this study revealed is the preference for activities in neighborhood parks and/or local city parks for many reasons, some which have previously been mentioned.

The structural constraint dimension relating to culture of the NPS is a universal characteristic among respondents, to some degree, in both phases. Again, lack of marketing to ethnic minority communities, not enough opportunities of interest, inadequate facilities, and the perception that RMNP is intended for middle-to-upper class white people include other examples of how this variable was measured.

Finally, as a supplemental area of inquiry, having more ethnic minorities working in the park, also an element assessed in the NPS culture, was a fairly balanced concern among respondents in both phases (e.g., approximately half of all individuals in each phase expressed this as a concern). Comments related to the need to educate the park staff regarding reasons for promoting ethnic diversity in employment and professional development. Having minority role models and "people like me" in leadership positions

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

was expressed as being very important to individuals in this study.

Similarly, the small proportion of Blacks and Latinos from the study sample that have visited RMNP had experiences across the spectrum from exceptional and “loved it” to discomfort and fear. The representation of intra- and interpersonal constraints were somewhat balanced overall.

Discussion

Using a mixed method approach provided a certain amount of evidence that some levels of discrimination existed in this study setting. Responses by both the panel of experts from across the country and minorities in the sample residing within a 60-mile radius of RMNP, offered a consistent explication regarding how discrimination affects decisions to visit this park. The attributes of avoidance and displacement, for example, were powerful indicators of non-visitation. It can be argued that attitudes of non-visitors, regarding their perceptions of visitor’s ethnicity, can influence the shaping of interpersonal constraints regarding a desire to venture out to RMNP or not. Convincing evidence for this phenomenon was obtained by the fact study participants (in both phases) note that minorities will typically not travel to locations they perceive they may not be welcome or comfortable and moving from one park area to another, due to fear of other dominant white visitors behavior towards them or their family (or friends), is prohibitive to a positive experience. Findings have shed some light on unique constraints associated with cultural experiences of some Blacks and Latinos relating to park use.

The findings of this study, for both phases collectively, can contribute to our understanding of outdoor recreation constraints specific to African American and Latino communities. On the basis of this analysis from combining the data, several pertinent aspects supporting both discrimination and constraints theory should be discussed. First, race, ethnicity, and culture (independently or some combination thereof) are factors that study participants could articulate when they discussed their attitudes or experiences relating to Rocky Mountain National Park and other similar natural areas.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Despite this aspect, important to note is that culture was a larger factor for some ethnic minorities than for others. Latinos noted that language issues and national origin, for instance, heavily influenced one's perception, and this was not a concern with Blacks or mixed ethnic/racial groups. On the other hand, more Blacks had a slightly stronger attachment to their culture based on their sense of identity, connections to cultural norms and traditions, and ethnic interaction preferences.

The structural constraint dimension relating to *culture of the NPS* is a universal characteristic among respondents to some degree in both phases. Lack of ethnic minorities on staff, not enough opportunities of interest, inadequate facilities, and the perception that RMNP is intended for middle-to upper class white people are examples highlighted in the results. One key informant stated:

"I believe the fairly rigid National Park Service definition of what a national park service visitor should do and how the visitor should do it is, after the obvious economic barrier by lower income families, is the biggest constraint to ethnic/cultural diversity among national park visitors."

Likewise, one Latina woman speaking in her native Spanish stated, *"I think color or race is not as important or where you are from, the important thing is that the park staff—including police rangers—need to be educated on how to relate better with people from different cultures."*

One common denominator is for NPS managers to recognize the interconnectedness of their decisions and management actions and the fact that the difficult questions they face are ultimately questions of value judgments and the desire for social change, not supplying political rhetoric. Social science is a key input to decision-making, but this represents only part of the answer. Hence, results show the need to sort out economic-based questions and issues from those which are social and/or political in nature. And, most important, there is a need to strike a balance between them.

A significant result from both phases is that while ethnicity/race should not be overlooked, this is not the most salient factor that

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

constrains the experiences and perceptions of participants in this study. When comparing groups for significant differences, gender and income have a stronger relationship to constraints as reflected in the focus groups primarily and, to a lesser degree of salience, with the Delphi panel of expert as well. Results corroborated findings from previous studies on gender where, for example, females report higher constraint scores than males (e.g., Arnold & Shinew, 1998; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1993; Jackson & Henderson, 1995; Virden & Walker, 1999).

Additionally, social class may have a more powerful influence on participation and nonparticipation than what may be truly understood or perceived (Hartmann & Overdeest, 1989; Hutchison, 2000; Philipp, 1995). As noted by Crawford, et al. (1991), constraints experiences may be more related to a *hierarchy of social privilege*. Nonetheless, results of this study also indicate neither gender-specific nor income factors alone are adequate explanations of these differentials but these two sets of variables influence the determination of ethnic-racial differences in park visitation and constraints to participation/visitation.

The challenges in addressing the constraints facing African Americans and Latinos along the Front Range of Colorado—regarding outdoor recreation—go beyond ethnicity/race and must be considered in terms of social and economic terms rather than exclusively ethnic or cultural ones. With the changing demographics comes a changing “ethnic economy.” We must better understand the implications. Although “times have changed,” we cannot ignore the importance of economic factors in contributing to both constraint and discrimination theories. That is, while based on the nature of emerging themes in this study, it was discovered that outdoor recreational decisions of both Blacks and Latinos depend largely on their economic resources as well as their cultural backgrounds to navigate the national park setting. As noted by Pickering (2000b) each society (or community) has its own understanding of the “economic behaviors and values” for that community. The need for sensitivity to cultural conceptions of economy is paramount in any field of study and outdoor recreation and resource management is no exception.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

The concept of life experiences within the urban/city boundaries as a major part of the “comfort zone” for Black respondents surfaced as a common thread for focus group participants while economic factors associated with outdoor recreation provides an example of differences within the Black community (e.g., cost an issue for some people not others). Furthermore, cultural stereotypes can be broken from learning about differences between Blacks and Latinos such as comprehending family structures, language barriers, and different perceptions of discrimination.

Inquiring about ones perception and/or experience with *discrimination* in the outdoors can be a powerful and loaded assertion. Historically, for example, there were rules and regulations excluding Blacks from participation in public parks and beaches. Although the Civil Rights and other similar movements have helped diminish these prohibitions, lingering effects have impacted people’s attitudes and perceptions in varying ways. “The persistence of discrimination, even among those who are educationally most similar, implies that discrimination—at least as a residual measure—cannot be ignored (or declared overestimated) and may have historically been as central to explanations of socioeconomic status gaps as education itself” (Marks, 1993, p. 167).

Results show noticeable support for discrimination as a theoretical basis. In the focus group interviews no one reported experiencing any overt or blatant discrimination. All experiences and perceptions on this topic revolved around discomfort with other visitors (e.g., examples provided about white visitors), displacement (e.g., moving from one location to another to avoid being on the receiving end of potential discriminatory acts), and avoidance (e.g., not visiting certain areas because of preconceived fears, stories they heard from elders, stories they read in the popular media).

Where discrimination surfaced for informants participating in the Delphi phase centered on inequity of national park facilities and opportunities (e.g., not accommodating extended families or neighborhood groups), perception by ethnic minorities that the national parks are an “exclusive club” for middle-upper class white people and “are not welcoming” to minorities. Other common themes for this category pertained to hiring procedures,

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

park programs, and interpretive efforts geared to the mainstream, traditional audiences.

Furthermore, the structural constraint of institutional racism is a powerful, very real, and largely documented problem among Native American communities in anthropology and ethnographic studies (Pickering, 2000a), yet scholars in parks and recreation continue to evade this issue with Blacks and Latinos calling it “perceived discrimination.” The constraint dimension, for example, of “culture of the NPS” received multiple comments as one of the greatest barriers to visiting RMNP more often or at all. The underlying strength of racism as a potentially very real issue should not be overlooked, rather addressed head on. The NPS has made a variety of concerted efforts at educating employees internally about the “need” for outreach; special programs and initiatives have occurred in some areas, and a few collaborative management efforts have only just begun (e.g., Interagency collaboration with Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Crissy Field Center, and the Presidio Trust).

Ethnic minority communities, however, from the local resident (e.g., “lay person”) up to community leaders and professionals continue to express lack of connection – not to the land, special places, and spectacular natural beauty, but a disconnect from how the Park Service manages these areas and conducts their business. This needs to change if attitudes towards the NPS will change. Results of this study suggest the need for the NPS to help mitigate the constraining forces and encourage more broad-based, integrative approaches to enhancing outdoor recreation and improving natural resources education.

Conclusions

Research on this topic is both simple and complex. The easy elements revolve around the notion that America’s national parks are for all people while the intricacy weaves around misunderstandings and challenges of ethnic and cultural diversity. This study consisted of a small sample yet because of the qualitative paradigms used, it contains rich responses and realizations. While the literature is somewhat inconsistent, it has established important cornerstones

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

for exploring the subject of ethnic minority recreation in national parks.

This present study identified and explored visitor use and non-use by ethnic minorities residing along the Front Range of Colorado (from Fort Collins to Denver) as well as engaged a national panel of Black and Latino professionals in natural resource management and related fields. Especially given the small proportion of ethnic minorities in the study area, this provides Rocky Mountain National Park with a well-informed sense of constraints to visiting the park. By understanding the results of this research, RMNP managers should determine what they can do in assisting with breaking down existing barriers; this includes implementing innovative outreach strategies while attempts are made to prevent further hurdles from occurring.

Regarding the theoretical frameworks, constraints research in recreation and parks has expanded in scope and gained sophistication over the last twenty years as a distinct “subfield of leisure studies” (Jackson, 1991). Since this was noted by Jackson more than sixteen years ago, the efforts to advance the general theory of constraints by incorporating the lessons learned from studying the recreational behavior of ethnic minorities have been limited. Discrimination will continue to be a critical component in furthering our understanding of underserved populations. The notion of discriminatory practices on public lands is a particularly volatile topic that researchers might be reluctant to address. Perhaps this is why *discrimination* in parks and recreation must remain in the forefront of theoretical frameworks in future research.

In part, as aptly noted by Marks (1993) and indisputably related to the results of the present study “it is impossible to ‘prove’ the presence or absence of discrimination” (p. 160, in Stanfield & Dennis). Furthermore, not all inequality is the result of discrimination, and not all discrimination results in inequality. Knowing the difference can mean a great deal for advancing the state of the art in research on race, ethnicity and culture in outdoor recreation. Additionally, and also noted by Marks, discrimination is not measured directly but is the residual (or net difference) between majority-minority attainment after other factors are held

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

constant (Marks, in Stanfield & Dennis, 1993).

For ethnic minorities, their experiences with discrimination around parks may not necessarily be any different from their experiences in life. Even if there are no discriminatory acts, people often expect something to occur because they may face certain circumstances daily or their perceptions of what might happen are enhanced.

Second, key inferences can be made about the methodological implications of this study. The use of a mixed-method approach accentuates how obtaining such an assortment of data can assist land managers in gaining a much better viewpoint of the issues relating to ethnic minority use of parks. Use of two qualitative techniques greatly enhanced the overall value and contribution to the field as well as the general outcomes of this study. The qualitative methods of focus group interviews and engaging a panel of experts via the Delphi technique allowed for obtaining depth of information, expression of attitudes, exploration of feelings, drawing out opinions, listening to stories about experiences, acquiring profound release of thoughts, and an all around wealth of “data” with multiple layers. The results are manifest in the robust material examined and quantity of all transcripts completed. Caution should be noted, however, in that the findings from this study cannot be generalized so inferences cannot be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population (Creswell, 2003).

Few studies employ mixed-methodology for pragmatic reasons, yet we feel combining two qualitative phases of the data in this study was a necessary and appropriate undertaking. This was based on the assumption that any bias inherent in particular data sources and methods would be neutralized when used in conjunction with other data sources and methods. Overall, combining the data added scope and breadth to this study, and provided refreshing and adequate judgments of inquiry. Use of mixed-methods to study ethnic minority populations may continue to be essential in the future for the parks and recreation field as well as other disciplines.

Suggestions for Future Research

Many suggestions can be made regarding current gaps and recommendations for future research. One concept relates to the process of “negotiation.” For example, in their synthesis of research, Jackson and Scott (1999) note that participants may be equally constrained as non-participants. They note that these groups are set apart by the fact participants have somehow found the course of action to address, alleviate, or even overcome their constraints (i.e., “negotiation”). How preferences and participation are linked in the negotiation process is not very well known. The problem with constraint negotiation is that the burden is almost always on individuals; societal issues must be addressed as well (Henderson, et al., 1996). Antecedent constraints (e.g., societal) such as gender expectations, familial support, and media messages are examples of social constraints that are difficult for an individual to overcome and have received little attention (Martin, 2004).

Sasidharan (2002) discusses the need to understand how race and ethnicity interact with other cultural variables (e.g., gender, age, religion) to influence outdoor recreation preferences. He concludes by pointing out the need to analyze cultural components (e.g., race and ethnicity, age and cohort, and gender) with “social roles, group relations, and inequality among other social structural variables” in order to increase overall understanding of leisure behavior (p. 8).

Furthermore, Rodriguez and Roberts (2002) found that much of the literature they reviewed examined race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in relation to outdoor recreation and parks visitation and that these variables have been studied either independently or in pairs (e.g., race and class, gender and ethnicity). Few studies, on the other hand, included the full combination of all variables and their association to participation in outdoor recreation activities. The gaps found were determinants that more research is needed on concepts of avoidance and displacement, people with disabilities, the elderly, motivation, user conflicts, and meaning/place attachment which made up, collectively, only 10% of the literature reviewed.

A recent study consisted of a content analysis of advertisements from three magazines (i.e., Time, Outside, and Ebony) over a sixteen

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

year period between 1984 and 2000. Advertisements taking place in the “great outdoors” or featuring models participating in wilderness activities rarely included Black models, while White people who frequent outdoor settings and activities were featured regularly in the ads. Within the pages of the magazine advertisements reviewed, Black models were limited to urban and suburban environments while results showed Whites had exclusive domain over the “great outdoors”. Findings of this study have potential consequences for how Blacks and Whites perceive wilderness recreation and wilderness spaces. Additionally, this also symbolized a need for ethnic media sources to consider the implications and potential new avenues (Roberts, 2007).

One example reflecting the growing need to understand the influence of ethnic media on communicating with diverse communities was a study conducted by Winter, Jeong, and Godbey (2004). Asian Americans in the Bay Area were surveyed to understand perceived constraints to visiting the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Among their numerous findings, results show this population indicated a heavy emphasis on utilizing ethnic media as important sources of information. This is also known to be essential in other racial and ethnic communities, including Blacks and Latinos (New America Media, 2007). In general, these (and other studies) indicates there is a dearth of research in this area of media representation relating to the field of outdoor recreation and parks management and illustrates a future need as well.

Closing thoughts

National Parks have really always been, and always will be, cultural icons. The management structure, political pressures, and heavy historical military influence have contributed to the current perceptions of these special places and often activities that may occur there as “a white thing.” Enormous efforts have taken place over the years by the NPS to welcome diversity and be more inclusive. Many parks have embraced the challenge of reaching out to diverse audiences through creative approaches such as hiring bilingual community liaisons, hosting unique cultural events (Posada processions, Pow-wow’s, etc), and inclusive interpretive

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

programs and messages such as telling the story of the Buffalo Soldiers (Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002). Parks across the country also have organized community programs and funding for transportation, multi-day experiences for inner-city school children, and intentional hires of bilingual staff at all levels. There is incredible hope for all people across cultures to experience the spectacular landscapes of our national parks and embrace the educational and recreational opportunities that abound. This can be achieved in a way that is comfortable, safe, rewarding, and empowering, to name a few.

Now is the time for the vision of the American dream we have for our parks to become real. We need to fulfill a vision of the dream for our national parks in which we are liberated from the politics of ethnicity/race to openly embrace any style, cultural dialogue, or image of parks as special places to all of us in some capacity regardless of what that might be. Learning about the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of different ethnic and cultural groups has huge merit; this fact is indisputable and warrants new directions.

Ensuring relevance is going to be the key to success. For example, education, increasing knowledge, providing exposure for youth, bringing “parks to the people”, and being visible in various forms of ethnic media. One of many ways of accomplishing this is for national park managers and other public land agency personnel to find ways to connect with journalists of ethnic media sources when promoting newsworthy events, stories, and park-related functions, and celebrations.

As reflected in this study, this means there is still a need to understand these facets about ethnic minorities to ensure or enhance their national park experience. Finally, the National Park Service must continue adjusting to the “changing demographics” reality because this is a trend that will only accelerate.

Authors Note and Acknowledgements: This study was based on doctoral research completed by Nina Roberts at Colorado State University. Funding was provided by Rocky Mountain National Park, U.S. National Park Service.

References

- Allison, M.T. (1988). Breaking boundaries and barriers: Future directions in cross-cultural research. *Leisure Sciences*, 10, 247-259.
- Anderson, D.H. & Schneider, I.E. (1993). Using the Delphi process to identify significant recreation research-based innovations. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 11(1), 25-36.
- Arnold, M. L., & Shinew, K. J. (1998). The role of gender, race, and income on park use constraints. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 16(4), 39-56.
- Baughman, M.J. (1985). Effective use of the Delphi process. In R.A. Leary (Ed.), *Discovering new knowledge about trees and forests* (US Forest Service GTR No. NC-135, pp. 69-76). St. Paul, MN: North Central Forest Experiment Station.
- Clark, R.N. & Stankey, G.H. (1991). New forestry or new perspectives? The importance of asking the right questions, *Forest Perspectives*, 1(1), 9-13.
- Comas-Diaz, L. (2001). Hispanics, Latinos or Americanos: The evolution of identities. *Cultural diversity and ethnic minority populations*, 7(2), 115-120.
- Crawford, D.W., Jackson, E.L., & Godbey, G. (1991). A hierarchical model of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, 13, 309-320.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Dwyer, J.F. (1994). Customer diversity and the future demand for outdoor recreation. General Technical Report RM-252. Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Floyd, M.F. (2001). Managing national parks in a multicultural society: Searching for common ground. *George Wright Forum*, (18)3, 41-51.

Floyd, M.F. (1999). *Race, ethnicity and use of the National Park System*. National Park Service, 1: 1-24. Washington, DC: Department of the Interior.

Gobster, P.H. (Ed.). (1993). *Managing Urban and High-Use Recreation Settings*. North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management GTR, NC-163. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin: USDA Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station.

Gómez, E. (2007). Race, Ethnicity, Recreation, and Leisure: An Assessment of Research Gaps. Unpublished report provided to the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 14p.

Gómez, E. (2003). Ethnicity and recreation; An abridged annotated bibliography. Unpublished report provided to the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 57p.

Gramann, J.H. & Allison, M.T. (1999). Ethnicity, race and leisure. In E.L. Jackson & T.L. Burton (Eds.), *Leisure Studies: Prospects for the Twenty-First century*. State College, PA: Venture.

Gramann, J. H. (1996). Ethnicity, race, and outdoor recreation: A review of trends, policy, and research (Miscellaneous Paper R-96-1). Vicksburg, MS: U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station.

Hartmann, L. A. & Overdeest, C. (1989). Race, ethnicity, and outdoor recreation participation: A state-of-the-knowledge review and theoretical perspective. In K. Zera (Ed.), *Southeastern Recreation Research Conference* (pp. 53-63), Athens, GA: Institute for Behavioral Research, U.S. Forest Service.

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

- Henderson, K.A. Bialeschki, M.D., Shaw, S.M. & Freysinger, V.J. (1996). *Both gains and gaps*. State College, PA: Venture.
- Henderson, K.A. & Bialeschki, M.D. (1993). Exploring an expanded model of women's leisure. *Journal of Applied Recreation Research, 18*(4), 229-252.
- Hutchison, R. (2000). Race and ethnicity in leisure studies. In W.C. Gartner and D.W. Lime (Eds.), *Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism*. Cambridge, MA: CAB International.
- Jackson, E.L. (Ed.)(2005). *Constraints to leisure*. State College, PA: Venture.
- Jackson, E.L. & Scott, D. (1999). Constraints to leisure. In E.L. Jackson & T.L. Burton (Eds.), *Leisure studies: Prospects for the Twenty-First century*, pp. 299-321. State College, PA: Venture.
- Jackson, E.L. & Henderson, K.A. (1995). Gender-based analysis of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences, 17*, 31-51.
- Johnson, C. Y., Bowker, J.M., Cordell, K. (2001). Outdoor recreation constraints: An examination of race, gender, and rural dwelling. *Southern Rural Sociology, 17*, 111-133.
- Johnson, C.Y. Bowker, J.M., English, D.B.K., Worthen, D. (1997). Theoretical perspectives of ethnicity and outdoor recreation: A review and synthesis of African and European-American participation. USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, GTR-SRS 11, 1-16.
- Jones, R.E. (1998). Black concern for the environment: Myth versus reality. *Society and natural resources, 11*, 209-228.
- Machlis, G.E. & Field, D.E. (2000). National parks and rural development: Practice and policy in the United States.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Washington, DC: Island Press.

Marks, C.C. (1993). Demography and race. In, J.H. Stanfield and R.M. Dennis (Eds.), *Race and ethnicity in research methods*, pp. 159-171. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Martin, D. (2004). Apartheid in the great outdoors: American advertising and the reproduction of a racialized outdoor leisure identity. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36(4), 513-535.

New America Media (2007). Expanding the news lens through ethnic media. Retrieved June 3, 2007, from the World Wide Web, <http://news.newamericamedia.org/news>.

Parker, J.D. & McDonough (1999). Environmentalism of African Americans: An analysis of the subculture and barrier theories. *Environment and Behavior*, 31(2), 155-177.

Parry, D., Shiness, K.J, Arnold, M. (2001). *Broadening the understanding of race and constraint*. Paper presented at the NRPA Leisure Research Symposium. Denver, CO.

Philipp, S.F. (1995). Race and leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, 17, 109-120.

Pickering, K.A. (2000a). *Lakota culture, World economy*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Pickering, K.A. (2000b). Alternative economic strategies in low-income rural communities: TANF, labor migration, and the case of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. *Rural Sociology*, 65(1), 148-167.

Richey, J.S., Mar, B.W. & Horner, R.R. (1985). The Delphi technique in environmental assessment: Implementation and effectiveness, *Journal of Environmental Management*, 21, 135-146.

Roberts, N.S. (2007). "Visitor/Non-Visitor Use Constraints:

Roberts–Use of Multiple Methods

Exploring Ethnic Minority Experiences and Perspectives.” General Technical Report, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco State University.

Rodriguez, D.A. & Roberts, N.S. (2002). “State of the Knowledge Report: The association of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in outdoor recreation experiences.” National Park Service, Social Science Program, General Technical Report, Colorado State University at Fort Collins.

Samdahl, D.M. & Jekubovich, N.J. (1997). A critique of leisure constraints: Comparative analyses and understandings. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 29(4), 430-452.

Sasidharan, V. (2002). Special issue introduction: Understanding recreation & the environment within the context of culture. *Leisure Sciences*, 24, 1-11.

Schelhas, J. (2002). Race, ethnicity, and natural resources in the United States: A review. *Natural Resources Journal*, 42, 723-763.

Shinew, K.J., Stodolska, M., Floyd, M., Hibbler, D., Allison, M., Johnson, C., Santos, C. (2006). Race and ethnicity in leisure behavior: Where have we been and where do we need to go? *Leisure Sciences*, 28, 403-408.

Shinew, K.J., Floyd, M.F. & Parry, D. (2004). Understanding the relationship between race and leisure activities and constraints: Exploring an alternative framework. *Leisure Sciences*, 26, 181-199.

Shores, K.A., Scott, D., Floyd, M.F. (2007). Constraints to outdoor recreation: A multiple hierarchy stratification perspective. *Leisure Sciences*, 29, 227-246.

Solop, F.I., Hagen, K.K., & Ostergren, D.(2003). “Ethnic and Racial Diversity of National Park System Visitors and Non-Visitors.”

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

- Technical Report submitted to the U.S. National Park Service Social Science Program. Social Research Laboratory, Northern Arizona University.
- Stanfield, J.H. & Dennis, R.M. (1993). *Race and ethnicity in research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2004). *Race and Hispanic or Latino origin*. Retrieved February 15, 2004, from <http://www.census.gov/>
- Viriden, R. J. & Walker, G.J. (1999). Ethnic/racial and gender variations among meanings given to, and preferences for, the natural environment. *Leisure Sciences*, 21, 219-239.
- Walker, G. J., Jackson, E.L., & Deng, J. (2005). Culture and leisure constraints: A comparison of Canadian and Mainland Chinese students. *National Recreation and Park Association Book of Abstracts for 2005 Leisure Research Symposium (LRS)*, National Park and Recreation Congress. San Antonio, TX.
- Weatherman, R. & Swenson, K. (1974). Delphi technique. In S.P. Hencley & J.R. Yates (Eds.), *Futurism in Education: Methodologies* (pp. 97-114). Berkeley, CA: McCutchen.
- West, P. C. (1989). Urban region parks and black minorities: Subculture, marginality, and inter-racial relations in park use in the Detroit metropolitan area. *Leisure Sciences*, 11, 11-28.
- Williams, D.R. & Carr, D.S. (1993). The sociocultural meanings of outdoor recreation places. In A.W. Ewert, D.J. Chavez, & A.W. Magill (Eds.), *Culture, conflict, and communication in the wildland-urban interface*, pp. 209-219. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Winter, P.L., Jeong, W.C., & Godbey, G.C. (2004). Outdoor recreation among Asian Americans: A case study of San Francisco Bay Area residents. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 22 (3), 114-136.

**Fire in de Cane:
METAPHORS OF INDO TRINIDADIAN
IDENTITY IN RAMABAI ESPINET’S
*The Swinging Bridge***

**Rosanne Kanhai
Western Washington University**

kaisebani kaisebani/
*mi Nana and mi Nanee was flying in a plane/
the plane catch a fire/ they fall inside the cane*
(Sundar Popo)

The evolution of identity is on-going, yet to articulate identity is the self analysis of a people’s understanding of who they are at a particular time. Perhaps in more stable societies, identity has not been a preoccupation, not the “stuff” of literature and other types of art. However, for us, in the western hemisphere, where indigenous populations have been brutally decimated and room made for more brutality in the uprootment, transportation and relocation of peoples from different parts of the globe, we find it a crucial to pause and understand who we are as we connect with each other. In the Caribbean, the articulations of identity are also placed within the geographic structure of an archipelago of islands.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Physically each island is surrounded by the mighty Atlantic, yet each is one step away the other. Historically and psychologically, the Caribbean populations are also one step away from their ancestral cultures, from the colonial cultures, and from the dominant culture of North America. A “swinging bridge” is an apt metaphor to explore the Caribbean history and reality of flux yet rooted-ness, of connectedness yet separation.

This paper is particularly concerned with Caribbeans of Indian descent. To mention Indians in the Caribbean is to come face to face with the colonial arrogance toward both the people of India and original inhabitants who, ironically were renamed “Indians.” In European racialized thinking there was no distinction between these two vastly different populations and civilizations. They were simply “barbaric” and could be compelled to contribute to the “progress” and “welfare” of the white “master” race. It is not necessary for me to refer to the many ways in which Europeans articulated and enacted their entitlement to world hegemony and supremacy. More important is to pay respects to the first inhabitants of the region—the Taino tribes who canoo-ed up and down those warm waters. The largest tribe—the Caribs—gave their name to that “elliptical basin” (to use Derek Walcott’s poetic phrase) (387) that continues to be criss-crossed. Jacqui Alexander makes central to her thinking “the tidal currents of the Middle Passage” (6) as she tells the spiritual history of Africans who were enslaved and brought across the Atlantic to serve the interests of European imperial power. *Ọlẹgba*, of the Yoruban pantheon re-established in parts of the Caribbean region, stands at the crossroads, a space that is ominous yet auspicious. Serge Bramley explains that it is not unusual to see *Macumba* shrines erected at city intersections in metropolitan Brazil.¹ They are symbols that Caribbean peoples are always at the crossroads where various cultural influences intersect, in the continuous process of becoming, or as V.S. Naipaul would say, there is always an arrival at another (material, psychological, spiritual, and social) location, and therefore into another state of being.² The bridge is swinging, and arrivals and departures are taking place.

The metaphor of swinging bridge, applicable to the Caribbean

Kanhai–Fire in de Cane

as a region, includes legal and illegal crossings. Many crossings follow the route and inclinations of the triangular trade of the nineteenth century. In today's world, narco-trafficking is perhaps the most profitable (to some), and destructive (to others), trade in the region. The Caribbean is the “third border” (another metaphor) to both North and South America, the former biggest consumer of narcotics, the latter the biggest supplier. Helicopter “drops” are made in the aquamarine waters that adorn tourist brochures. “Packages” can be smuggled, side by side with tourists, on luxury yachts or cruise liners. Narco-trafficking and the sex trade go hand in hand. *Toute bagai*— human trafficking is part of the *bagai*!³ Legal and illegal crossings are made, too, by Caribbeans, migrating to North America for career and education opportunities. Kamau Braithwaite writes

there was so much going on above us & around us
what with the ferrymen shouting and fighting for
survivors though we were all quite dead & bloated
by this time
& some of us had even started floating on our
blacks up to the surface which is when I suppose we
cd barely see
that nobody wasn't throwing no lifelines nor booies
nor anything like that towards us (1998: 109)

His images, painfully extracted from the slave trade, speak of the contemporary situation as well. The reference to “the ferrymen” brings in the element of a voyage across time and ever-looming danger of crossing into death. These crossings are also navigations of identity—willingly, in desperation, or through coercion. The traveler embarks with one identity, disembarks with another, yet s/he carries the former into the latter environment. Ramabai Espinet's novel, *The Swinging Bridge* draws metaphors from this reality of crossings in order to explore identity for people of Indian ancestry who crossed to the Caribbean within the historical frame of nineteenth century indentureship.⁴

With the emancipation of slaves, indentured immigrants from colonial India were Britain's solution to the need for plantation labor. So thousands of Indians—coerced, manipulated, or self-

determined—set off in the holds of ships, bound for “Chinidad,” (and other Caribbean territories) ⁵ the land of sugar,⁶ with little awareness of their place vis-à-vis the ex-slave population in the colonial history of the region. Relations between the new arrivals and the existing Afro Trinidadian population were not cordial for Afro Trinidadians saw the new workers as strike breakers whose labor would undermine their own attempts to secure livable wages. The colonial policy of “divide and rule” maintained hostilities, the negotiations of which continue to be central to power sharing as well as to identity articulations in Trinidad.

For Indians, interminable months on the *kala pani* had brought them to interminable years on the plantations during which the struggle of the laborers for physical survival was simultaneous with their attempts to define and articulate themselves in the new environment. Here we have the earliest metaphor of Indo Caribbean identity—*kala pani*—which literally translates as “black waters,” as the immigrants referred to the oceans they crossed for the first time. According to the Hindu system, to cross the ocean would be to lose caste and therefore one’s place in the social and religious order. For those of lower castes, this loss would be liberating, for those of higher castes, it would be grievous. In any case, the venture was one of uprootment and the crossing was fraught with physical dangers, with a deep sense of the unknown, but also with the anticipation of starting a new life. The combination of loss, fear, confusion and courage has been expressed metaphorically as *kala pani*. This metaphor has been used to make a comparison between the historical crossing and the discursive crossing of boundaries that occur in writing. In her exploration of the writing of Indo Caribbean women, Brinda Mehta describes the metaphor of the *kala pani* as “a discourse of rupture that initiates transgressive boundary crossings through (self-) assertions in literary production” (4). Espinet is one of these writers whose work transgresses the boundaries of what is expected of Indo Caribbean women. She develops female protagonists who embody the spirit of adventure and self-will that motivated the original women who crossed the *kala pani*. *Swinging Bridge* invokes the first swinging bridge:

The year is 1879, and the women have been brought by train

Kanhai—Fire in de Cane

form Benares to the port city of Calcutta. Small boats ferry them to a ship, The Artist, anchored in the mighty Hoogly River. The gangplank clacks and swings precariously as the women scramble up on the deck. (3)

And so begins a novel whose theme and structure is crossings via swinging bridges. Through the reflections of its protagonist Mona, an Indo Trinidadian woman who has migrated to Canada, this novel assembles the history of a family and a people for whom journeying defines their identity. Mona's family, after a few generations in Trinidad, left around the time of flag independence in the early 1960s, and when we meet them Canada some forty or so years later, the family is gathered around Mona's older brother, Kello, who is dying of AIDs. It is his wish that Mona go to Trinidad to recover family land that has been lost during hard times. As she contemplates the journey back to Trinidad, floods of memories surface and, on arrival, she combines the property business with an excavation of the family's history. Mona is helped by her cousin Bess who is simultaneously working within a committee to establish a museum to record and celebrate the survival strategies of the early Indian immigrants. Through Mona's analysis of her family's life, we follow the development of Indo Trinidadian identity.

It is useful to frame Indo Trinidadians exploration of identity within Caribbean's articulation of its regional culture. The earliest metaphor of Caribbean culture is creolization. Historically, the term "creole" originated within the plantation structure where Europeans used the word creole to mean island-born—people, animals, and plants—as opposed to European-born. The word was coined to express the irreversible adaptations to geography and social circumstances. Implicit, too, was the hardiness and beauty of a creole entity. The contemporary use of the word creole originates in Kamau Braithwaite's (1971) definition of creole as the interculturalization of African and European elements to make up Caribbean culture. He explains creole as the development a hybridized culture out of the brutal uprootment, and compulsory relocation and re-indigenization of African people as they re-invent(ed) all aspects of culture in their on-going resistance and struggle for liberation at all levels. Creole can be applied aspects of

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

culture such as language, religion, family structures, music, food, fashion, etc. Creole is grassroots impelled in its creativity and not always accessible to those outside the culture; it evolves out of the instincts and struggle for freedom in all aspects of life; it is ever changing and ever dynamic in unpredictable patterns.

The limitations of Braithwaite's use of the term creole, however, when applied to the Caribbean region as a whole, is that it understates the indigenous inhabitants of the region—the thousands who were massacred but of whom there are resonances throughout the region, as well as the descendants who live in tribal communities or among the mainstream populations; and excludes groups who came under indentureship contracts from China and India. Absent, too, are the groups from various parts of the Middle East who have contributed to the Caribbean's cultural tapestry. For groups who migrated from China, India and the Middle East, severing from the ancestral culture was not as brutal as African slavery, thus the process of re-indigenization has been different from that of Afro Caribbeans. For Indo Trinidadians (and people of Indian ancestry in other parts of the Caribbean), the challenge has been to reconcile the Indian ancestry with its Caribbean present and future, and to carve out a space for itself in a part of the world where it is a minority—demographically and culturally.

While hostilities among Afro and Indo Trinidadian groups simmered at the grassroots level since the arrival of Indians on the shores of the island, these matters were first articulated in public in the late 50s and early 60s, at the national level, during the build-up to independence. Afro Trinidadian leadership severely chastised and, according to some perspectives, punished Indo Trinidadians for not completely turning their backs on the Indian ancestry. Indo Trinidadians were called "a recalcitrant and hostile minority masquerading as an Indian nation" by Eric Williams, political leader, in 1958, as he condemned Indo Trinidadians' refusal to accept his leadership and assimilate whole-heartedly into the Afro-creole mainstream according to its rhythm and pace. The threat of engulfment for this group has been a combination of the colonial forces of westernization and the African Caribbean majority presence throughout the region. *Swinging Bridge* describes how

Kanhai—Fire in de Cane

one particular family negotiates identity in this context, developing “swinging bridges” of connections with the present cultural and political streams as well as with the Indian past.

In Section One of the novel, *“Borrowed Time,”* Mona goes back into the history of the family, focusing a great deal of Da-Da, her father, as an Indo Trinidadian man for whom the attempts to creolize brought much frustration. Creolization meant adapting to the mainstream in everyday activities such as language, dress and cuisine, as well as making one’s way out of the rural villages that grew up around the plantations into the urban mainstream for education and socio-economic mobility. To make this latter move, Da-Da mortgaged family land although land ownership was/is deeply embedded in the consciousness of Indo Trinidadians. Indians initially agreed to contracts that promised return to India after 3 or 5 years but, more often than not, return passage did not materialize and some Indians accepted land in exchange for passage back to India. Others squeezed pennies out of their meager earnings to buy land. Often the land they got in Trinidad was land that no-one wanted—swamp land that sank underfoot, land that was infested with mosquitoes, fleas, and chiggers, land that carried malaria, typhoid, diarrhea, hookworm, and a host of other diseases. But they cleared and drained the land and *lepayed* the huts that they built,⁷ even as they cried out to colonial governments for electricity, potable water and infrastructure. Indians and Indo Trinidadians at this time were agricultural people, grounded in earth-based practices that evolved in Hindu religion. Also, from the depths of semi-servitude, Indians placed their hopes in property ownership to be used for building home and family, as collateral to obtain investment loans for business and education, or for retirement income. Pappy’s (Mona’s grandfather) generation, emerging from indentureship, focused on grounding the family in the new land; Da-Da, of the next generation, thrust himself into the mainstream where creole legal and commercial transactions had to be negotiated. Says Mona, “Da-Da was a modern man, sure he could not have been easily fooled, and that the decision to sell and move to the city was a sound one” (58). Betterment of his family was Da-Da’s priority, but, exploited, tricked, ridiculed, and finally

bankrupt in the hands of moneylenders, it is up to his own father, Pappy, to start again with a donkey and cart. As *Swinging Bridge* points out, Whites and near-Whites got credit from the commercial banks, Blacks from their lodges, and Indians had no choice but to accept the impossible terms of money lenders. Mona, coping with her own problems in Canada, recognizes “the wiliness that early Indians like our own grandparents, ignorant in the ways of the creole culture, needed to work out a means of survival in the face of so much hostility” (59).

Through her grandparents’ and parents’ lives, Mona sees that not only did Indo Trinidadians struggle against the poverty of the plantation and post plantation life; they were also stigmatized for having that life. The psychological and material legacy of colonization defined the clean, good life as far away from the plantation, lodged in the colonial ideal of socio-economic mobility that went hand in hand with the adoption of Europeanized practices. Plantation life was the shame of the region and those who were trapped there were stigmatized. Black consciousness gave another twist to this type of thinking in countries like Trinidad and Guyana (and to some extent Suriname) where black consciousness, ironically, took the form of hostility against people of Indian descent. V.S. Naipaul explores this trend in his novel *A Way in the World* that shows a pre-independence political meeting in Woodford Square, Port-of-Spain, where open articulation of the pain of Black history becomes ritualized into a movement where Whites may feel excluded but not threatened because “much of the hostile feeling released by the sacrament of the square would have focused on the Indians” (1994: 35). Indo Trinidadians became the target of Black rage even though, as Naipaul shows, there were, at the time, many destitute Indo Trinidadians roaming the streets of Port-of-Spain, some making the city square their home; as well as high levels of poverty and malnutrition in the neglected rural Indo communities.

Nor did Indo Trinidadians see poverty and depression of large numbers of Afro Trinidadians as their concern. The legacy of joint colonial oppression was not a unifying factor and any notion that similar oppression brings groups together can be dispelled. Instead, as Kelvin Singh says in his analysis of later nineteenth and early

twentieth century Trinidad,

The mutual apprehensions of the African, Indian and Colored components of the colony's middle class, reinforced by the limited upward social mobility achieved by the more ambitious and fortunate elements of that class, militated against any sense of compulsion to transcend racial or ethnic boundaries to achieve common goals. (224)

Class mobility was a driving force that demanded competition, not collaboration, with one's "Others." It must be kept in mind that for many class mobility meant achieving more than hand-to-mouth existence and clinging to family and community was necessary for survival. The democratic process in this history of racialization threw up political parties along ethnic lines and every family was caught in the schisms that split the population asunder. Mona describes the "outrage and sense of despair" in the letters that Da-Da wrote to the daily newspapers to protest the "partisan display of power for the benefit of the black population" (72). Da-Da appealed to the country not to participate in the politics of Afro Trinidadian supremacy being constructed by "De Doctah"—so called to reflect the deep admiration and loyalty bestowed him by much of the Afro Trinidadian sector of the population. Says Mona, "In Da-Da's letters I read the map of our departure from that early island home into a Canadian migrant existence" (72).

Migration to Europe or North America has always been a "swinging bridge" for people of the Caribbean as they widened their personal space. Colonialist Presbyterianism was the raft on which Mona's family left for Canada. The majority of Indians who came from India were Hindus, with a lesser number of Muslims and a few Christians. Mona's family was of Hindu stock and converted to Canadian Presbyterianism in order to get admission in Presbyterian run primary schools. Canadian missionaries targeted Indo Trinidadian communities, offering education in exchange for Christian souls. Religious and secular education was the way out of the cane-fields and cocoa or citrus plantations. Christianity, westernization and social mobility all came together and the family felt aligned to Canada long after they (or at least Da-Da as head of the family) had given up on finding comfort in the Christian God.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Indo Trinidadian families who wanted to maintain Hindu-derived practices attempted to syncretise both traditions, but gradually Hindu rituals within the home dwindled, and there developed a distinction between Hindu and Indian. Similar trends were taking place within Muslim families. The slippery category of creolized Christian Indian evolved. Says Mona, “newly educated people would throw out everything Indian at first, and would slowly gather back into their live only those relics that were essential for survival...all seeping gradually back into Indian lives in the towns and all well hidden except at home” (29). I use the term “slippery” because, as *Swinging Bridge* shows, creolizing Indo Trinidadians had to be always on guard lest they “slip” and reveal their rural Hindu roots since colonialist attitudes and procedures made Hindu culture an impediment in the road to “progress.” Creolizing Indians suffered the contradictions of rejecting aspects of the ancestral culture that were their sources of survival and the wellsprings of their creativity.

Also, Hindus (and Muslims) met with obstacles at the level of state governance. For example, there were many instances of Indian land being confiscated by the state because, until 1946, Hindu and Muslim marriages were illegal and “bastard” children could not inherit property from their parents. The state seized and redistributed much hard-earned lands. Thus, even sex between non-Christians was illegal.⁸ It follows that cultural taboos that censored sexual behavior also reflected colonial attitudes. Not quite understanding how history bears down on them in complex layers, Mona and her girlfriends are confused about the rules regarding courtship and sex. Section Two, “Manahambre Road,” explores Mona and her adolescent friends’ attempts to understand how to shape their lives; sexual matters were, expectedly, important. On the one hand, their Indian/Hindu background, with its tradition of arranged marriages, insisted on no contact with the opposite sex. On the other hand, the practice of marriage at a young age, also typical of Hindu/Indian families, gave rise to the stereotype in mainstream Trinidad that Indian girls were sexually precocious. Hanging over Indo Trinidadian female sexuality was also the notion that female sexuality had free rein during indentureship when the male-female

ratio was at times 8-1 and women had some measure of freedom in their choice of sexual partners. Rather than seeing this pattern as sexual liberation, it was chastised by Christianity as sinful. *Swinging Bridge* describes that in the “slow, deadly respectability” (29) of Presbyterianism, Indo Trinidadian parents were overly strict, which in turn was ridiculed by non-Indians as backward, since it was seen as grounded in Hindu practices of gender separation. Mona recounts,

Susie’s [her school friend] family was as rigid as mine about allowing her to go to parties and public fetes. Most of my Indian friends had the same problem, but we suffered in silence. It was yet another shameful Indian secret to be kept from our creole friends and those of other races who would hold us up to ridicule for being backward. (186)

Western style romances offered escape fantasies for the girls who were surrounded by wifhood drudgery, incestuous abuse, or suicide among their peers. Yet these fantasies also brought culturally loaded recriminations. When, as school girls, Mona and her friends are caught with romance novels, they are accused of being historically over-sexed. The tendency to promiscuity was seen as a by-product of the plantation life, to be erased by Presbyterian religion and education. Miss Camilla Lee, a Presbyterian teacher, reprimands, “I say all-yuh leave that kinda ting behind on the estate long time! Why all-yuh so hot up?” (144) And Lee makes the connection between sex with low-income Indo Trinidadian men and curtailment of opportunities for advancement when she says, “What these little taxi-driving boys could give you all in life?” (144) For Mona and her friends, the penalty was ultimate if they stepped out of the narrow confines set for them; education was the needle’s eye through which they could pass to escape a life of drudgery and misery, and, along with academic achievement, this education included colonial Presbyterian-defined definitions of appropriate sexual behavior. Says Mona, “One false move could cost everything—my whole life” (139). As becomes apparent when a lovelorn friend commits suicide, to expect the romance of comic books was a false move.

In fact, in transitioning from Hindu gender arrangements

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

to creolized structures of more casual intermingling, there was no clear definition of what was not a false move. Inter-racial relationships were a sore point. Indo Trinidadian parents were wary that mainstreaming put their daughters at risk for getting sexually involved with Afro Trinidadian males and, given the context of racial Othering, this was a serious betrayal. Mona feels the wrath of her father's anxiety when, as a teenage girl, her shift dress catches the eyes of males. Mona's father reprimands, and later tears the offending dress and makes her kneel in the yard. Mona is of course bewildered, but later reflects that all her father's objections were about the possibility of Bree, the Afro Trinidadian male who is her first love. Sex was not just sex, it was the core of ethnic identity and as Patricia Mohammed explains, there was a stronger historical pattern of Indo Trinidadian women, vis-à-vis their male counterparts, marrying out of their ethnic group (194-95). The Indo Trinidadian community was watchful that schooling put its daughters in spaces where they would spurn the very same "backwardness" from which education would liberate them. Creolization carried the risk of evaluating everything that was Indian as backward. Non-creolized Indo Trinidadian males were part of this backwardness; immodest dress the first symptom that an Indo Trinidadian woman had internalized the notion that Indian traditions and people were backward. Mona first comes into contact with those sentiments when a taxi driver "drops" words for her:

Indian boy go ketch hell jes now. Nowadays all de girls going in for Creole boy. Watch them nuh, in dey tight skirt and tight pants, looking for Creole boy. Indian boy eh good enough for them, Indian boy go see trouble jes now, yuh go see. (172)

Creole here would mean any ethnicity that included African. Anxiety about masculinity can also be framed within the construction of masculinity in the Caribbean context of colonial hierarchical multiculturalism. For white Trinidadians, male confidence was located in western hegemony. Afro Trinidadian men were seen as physically strong, athletic, aggressive, and therefore having sexual prowess. Indo Trinidadian men were considered as physically weak, family-bound, un-aggressive and rural; all these traits added up to sexual inferiority. *Swinging Bridge* illustrates this disdain for Indo

Kanhai—Fire in de Cane

Trinidadian male sexuality during a Carnival (mardi gras) season when Da-Da is accosted thus,

The woman was middle-aged, voluptuous, dressed in tight pants and a short jersey top. She sang before Da-Da in a trance, her closed fists positioned at crotch level, both thumbs making scooping movements, while he stared straight ahead, not a flicker crossing his face. (101)

The woman would be Afro Trinidadian. She mocks Da-Da's sexual (im)potency in a symbolic rape and Da-Da, with no way of responding to this public humiliation, stands paralyzed, even more convinced that "It have no place here for Indians. I have to get out of here. By hook or crook I go get out, yuh hear mih?" (101) At the national level also, Indo Trinidadian men were discursively emasculated since the media, cultural mainstream, and the governance structures were, after the colonial period, increasingly Afro Trinidadian dominated, with lingering respect for Whites or near-Whites. Bree—the young, urban, creole athlete—is bursting with sexual confidence that is gifted to him in a process that has belittled Da-Da. That Bree's self-identity is grounded in the ascendancy of Afro Trinidadian politics is revealed when Mona and her friends question Bree on his total loyalty to Afro Trinidadian leader, the Doctah. Bree's response is to repeatedly slap Mona, precipitating an end to their relationship. Years later, when, in New York, Bree casually announces that he is safe on the subway because he is Black, Mona reflects, "His words, casual, unthinking, disturbed me. He was black, yes, and I was not. Would I be safe on the subway too?" (188). In fact, she reflects, even if she could be seen as black in New York, there was no room for that type of thinking in Trinidad.

Can a swinging bridge be constructed to cross the gap between Mona and Bree?

Some Indo Trinidadian theorists have utilized the term "dougla" as a metaphor of the interculturalization of African and Indian based cultures in Trinidad at the grassroots level. The word dougla is derived from the Bhojpuri word for bastard or illegitimate.⁹ It has been used in Trinidad and Guyana to refer to a person of mixed African and Indian ancestry. Shalini Puri coined the term "dougla poetics"

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

as a means for articulating potentially progressive cultural identities de-legitimized by both the dominant culture and the Mother Culture...the figure of the dougla draws attention to the reality of interracial contact; it names a contact that already exists. Second, the dougla could provide a rich symbolic resource for interracial unity. (1999:273)

Puri's dougla poetics is a counter to ethnic purity as well as to Braithwaite's valorization of creole culture as developing from the interculturalization of African and European elements. The term dougla articulates the reality of post-independence in Trinidad and Guyana where identity is being molded within the turbulent confluence, of the Ganges and the Nile,¹⁰ to refer to another metaphor. I personally used the term "dougla feminism" in a lecture at UWI Center for Gender & Development to critique the Afro domination in Caribbean feminism and to make a case for a Caribbean feminist movement that could draw on and be enriched by the experiences of the Indian populations in the region.

However the calls to ethnic nationalism are rooted as they are in the struggle for power in a history of ethnic division. Independence in the 1960s marked a culminating point in this history. Ushered in by an Afro Trinidadian dominated political party, independence was clearly an anti-colonial triumph for the Afro Trinidadian population who set the pace and tone, despite the protests by Indo Trinidadian leaders that their people were being left in the cane-fields, literally and figuratively. The "face of the nation" was metaphorically and literally black male. The case was made that it was time for white men to hand over leadership to black men. Black women were expected to give support and brown men and women were pushed to the margins in that almost-sacred transition. Yet, the invocation of national unity and historical pride compelled the recognition that those in the cane-fields were Indo Trinidadians, and there were token attempts to exoticize cane-field life at the cultural events organized to celebrate independence. Mona recalls La Rosette, a dancer and choreographer from the city, training Indo Trinidadian students in the sugar belt to put into dance the motions of cutting cane. She urged them,

"Cut cane! Like this! Now bend, now walk with a bucket of

Kanhai–Fire in de Cane

water on your head, walk with a bundle on your back, a child, a bag of cocoa, walk with your heads up, proudly, proudly, peasant women, country women, cut cane!" (68)

These students showed little enthusiasm; they could not participate in exoticizing the peasant life. The misery of the cane-fields surrounded these students; they saw parents stretching themselves so that their children could escape the cane-fields. La Rosette's choreography, culled from her training in Western and African forms was creolized, but did not adapt to the reality of Indo Trinidadians in the sugar cane belt. There is no indication that she made efforts to understand this groups thinking or to study their art forms. Creolized city people could come to the sugar belt to "teach" culture but there was no acknowledgment that the city folk could "learn" from for the rural artists. For example, Sundar Popo, a talented Indo Trinidadian chutney singer,¹¹ was at the time singing

*kaisebani kaisebani*¹²

mi Nana and mi Nanee was flying in a plane
the plane catch a fire
they fall inside the cane

Creating an image of Nana and Nanee consumed by the airplane/cane fire,¹³ Popo echoed the despair that the much celebrated independence was not freeing Indo Trinidadians them from the cane.¹⁴ Says Sheila Rampersad, "This cry came from a man who had spent his life in the sugar cane belt where the communities were named for the cane scales: Scale #1, Scale #2, etc." This metaphor of being trapped in a cane fire powerfully expresses Indo Trinidadians understanding of their desperate lot at this time.

Yet escape by "plane" was possible for some, including Mona's family as they planned and executed a migration to Canada. Significantly, Mona makes a distinction between Trinidad as "island home" and Canada as "migrant existence," for re-indigenization, as it happened in Trinidad, was never attempted in Canada. The migration to Canada is not presented as another step in the journey from India with Trinidad as a stop-over. *Swinging Bridge* shows that many Indo Trinidadians left because they felt themselves "at a standstill. The bloody racial riots in British Guiana had fuelled their sense of despair about the future" (77). The reference is

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

to the Forbes Burnham regime of the 1960s and 70s in Guyana which directed an agenda of violence against Indo Guyanese including rape of Indo Guyanese women, street attacks, looting and arson of Indo Guyanese businesses and farms, and seizure of Indo Guyanese homes and properties. These incidents prompted an exodus of Indo Guyanese to North America, Europe and other Caribbean territories. Indo Trinidadians saw the Guyanese situation as their worse nightmare come true, and as the actualization of the threat of aggression that Afro Trinidadians expressed in political speeches and calypso. They saw this aggression as regionally supported since the anti-Indian violence in Guyana raised hardly a murmur from the Afro Caribbean politicians, historians, artists and social commentators in all fields. The silence spoke volumes and it did not take much stretching of the imagination to be nervous that what was happening in Guyana could easily happen in Trinidad. Yet there was much sadness for Mona's family in leaving "the earth where [their] navel string was buried" (77).

But leave they did, heading for Canada where there was a connection through Presbyterianism. In *Swinging Bridge*, the family enters a milieu of infinite swinging bridges that have brought individuals and groups of various ethnicities to Canada, itself a country with a history of European conquest, followed by Anglo-Canadian hegemony; and where indigenous peoples and migrant peoples of color, and to some extent francophone Canadians exist in marginalized statuses. We see the adult Mona who is Othered as an Indian in Trinidad but who identifies with the people of color in Canada such as Carene, a Haitian Canadian woman, with whom Mona is working to make a film on the historic lives of Haitians. The bridge that swings both women together is constructed through, one, their shared experiences as people of color in a major Canadian city and two, the feminist awareness that (Caribbean) women are "edited out of history" (11). For Mona it is a feminism that honors the struggles of women who experience multiple layers of oppression based on ethnicity, class, education and immigrant status. As a person of color in Canada, she brings from Trinidad the sensitivity that males who are not of the dominant ethnicity are marginalized. Mona's awareness of white hegemonic global power

is one of the reasons she cannot bond with the Euro Canadian Roddy who makes little effort to understand the chaos of her life as it relates to the privilege of peace and security he enjoys. Says Mona, “Peace in Europe indeed, Roddy my love, and no peace at all beyond the line” (205). Yet she must explore how this legacy of violence is woven into sexism within oppressed groups even as these groups struggle for self definition and social justice. How does the Indo Trinidadian woman define agency in such a context?

Ramabai Espinet’s short story, “Barred,” a sort of predecessor to *Swinging Bridge*, uses the fictional form to work out some possibilities for an Indo Trinidadian woman. As Shalini Puri pointed out, (2004: 205-215) this story culminates in a Indo Trinidadian narrator who, in the depths of poverty establishes a little shop for economic sustenance and opens up to the Afro Trinidadians around her — the “Negro gentleman” who was her first customer and the “Creole woman” who showed how to make sugar-cakes and tamarind balls. The narrator’s male partner cooperates when he sees the viability of the enterprise. My own story “Soul Food” (2001: 91-94) explores the potential of the role of an Indo Trinidadian woman shop keeper in a multicultural village. As this story shows, it was a role suited to Indo Trinidadian women with little education but with domestic skills and an ethic of starting from scratch. This “scratch” included the influences of a multi-ethnic community, and the development of a creolization as a way of life evolving out of necessity, commonsense and spontaneous contact with available styles and raw materials. We see a version of this creolization process in the character of Muddie, Mona’s mother, who nourishes her family on “Creole pastries” or “stewed beef with heavy dumplings instead of rice, an innovation that everybody liked” (38). Muddie never articulates a theory of creolization; her concern is to hold “together the fragments, creating something out of nothing” (39). Examples of Muddie’s simple, yet consistent acts of securing her family through transitions and crises abound. For example, during the rainstorms in Ramgoolie Trace where the family sojourns for a while, it is Muddie who places

...tin cans and buckets underneath all the leaks, after she had shone a candle in every crack and crevice of the house

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

searching for scorpions and chenilles and had killed all the mosquitoes that had flattened themselves along the wall... (109)

Her inventiveness as she feeds her family and keeps them safe and dry draws on whatever resources she can put her hands on— material and/or cultural. Muddie is also Mona's moral/social compass. Vividly imprinted in Mona's memory of a time in Trinidad when Muddie defended Baboonie, an impoverished old woman who lived alone and whose body became the dumping ground upon which the village men spilled the sewage of their lust. However, Mona also sees Muddie's pain and limitations. The sexual attack on Muddie by Badall (a male relative), and the secrecy that protects him, show Mona the danger that Indian women meet within the family and ethnic group to which they are expected to pledge loyalty. As in "Barrèd," *Swinging Bridge* also shows that there is danger inside and danger outside for the Indo Trinidadian woman. All this is the consciousness that Mona takes with her to Canada but her unanswered questions propel her to take the swinging bridge back to Trinidad.

Mona's return takes place in Part Three of the novel, called "Caroni Dub"—a metaphoric term that brings together two disjunctive sites—the former a geographic location, the latter Jamaican musical form. Caroni is historically and mythically the genesis of the Indo Trinidadian people, the sugar belt that pulled them across the *kala pani* and curled around them, fastening them in a tight embrace of love and hate, hope and despair. Caroni, its name derived from the main river that irrigates the plains of Central Trinidad, is also the liminal space between country and town, creole and coolie.¹⁵ This is where Espinet anchors the swinging bridge to reconnect her family from Canada. Mona's family is from South Trinidad and her decision to place her linchpin in Central is explained in her dream:

I am driving on the well-cut new highway that joins the two cities of my life, Port of Spain and San Fernando. I apprehend a newly prescribed order. Here on this highway where the urban North meets the rural South. The bridge across the Caroni River is splendid and wide; small boats are anchored at the

Kanhai–Fire in de Cane

edge where the river road at the mouth of the swamp leads to a bird sanctuary for scarlet ibises and white egrets. (264)

Via this highway-come-swinging bridge, rural meets urban, and the ugliness of plantation history gives way to the beauty of the swamp birds. The splendor of the ripening cane, “their silver arrows shooting into the sky,” is the magic reality of the Indo Trinidadian inheritance—sordid in its history yet transcendent in its natural beauty. The dreamer’s persona is the mongrel dog that runs alongside the highway, “her dugs loose and flapping, tongue hanging and dry.” Traversing a landscape that is fraught with conflict, this dog is in panic, caught as she is “in that dread game called life” (264). But play the game Indo Trinidadians must, as they cross back and forth on the swinging bridge. The rhythm of this game is “Caroni Dub.”

Dub is a musical form that evolved in Jamaica in the late 1970s in communities where incomes are the lowest and political clout the leanest. Dub basically remixes existing pieces of music and/or adds sound effects to what is already there. It was prompted by the Dancehall culture in urban Jamaica where huge sound systems were placed in open air venues and Deejays had to be creative in the use of a limited number of recordings. Deejays compete with each other to come up with an infinite number of variations of the original recording or to layer various recordings into one rendition. Every rendition is a remix but yet is an original, evolving out of factors such as the mood of the crowd, the profile of the Deejay, the range of instruments available and the social circumstances at the time. External sounds can be included such as the noise of passing vehicles, barking dogs or slamming doors. In other words, the ‘soul’ of the community finds expression.

Swinging Bridge coins the term Caroni Dub to articulate the rhythm of Indo Trinidadians, culled from infinite remixes of the influences of India, the Caribbean and North America. In this novel, the original artist of Caroni Dub is the rand—the widowed or otherwise single Hindu woman in nineteenth century India who, outcast by her family, was compelled to sing and perform in order to earn a living. Spurned and ostracized as prostitutes, perhaps sexually abused, many of these women either chose or

were manipulated into indentured migration. They formed bands to comfort and protect each other on the way and when they arrived in the Caribbean. Says *Swinging Bridge* "The records of indentureship to the Caribbean show that Brahmin¹⁶ widows formed an inordinate number of females who migrated" (3). These women carried with them religious, epic and love songs and rituals that registered the creative consciousness of their ancestral communities. Relocated in Trinidad, they were the purveyors of culture and religion that (in) formed the cultural bedrock of Indo Trinidadian communities as they shaped themselves. These women (and some men) were the griots of the community yet they did not get the respect traditionally accorded to griots in many cultures.

Espinet's valorization of the rand is not nostalgia for India but a recognition that Indian ancestry, carried in the hearts and minds of those who migrated, gave the indentureds grounding to build a culture that adapted to the new conditions. Says Mona, "I never wanted to go to India, a place where our ancestors had left more than a century ago" (40). Mona's interest is in the Indians in the Caribbean, not in India. She is thrilled to excavate information on Gainer, her ancestor, a talented woman who, while indentured, sought passes from the colonial overseers to sing and perform on weekends at weddings and other special celebrations, thereby earning extra money. Undoubtedly, many Indo Trinidadian families got a much needed economic supplement from such earnings.

The *Ramayana*, perhaps the best known Hindu epic, has been sung, recited, performed, put into puppet shows and taken on a myriad of manifestations in India and wherever Hindus have migrated. Unlike other holy texts such as the *Koran*, the *Ramayana* lends itself to reinterpretation for any and every occasion. The early dubbing of the *Ramayana* in the Caribbean were remixes that expressed the mood of the indentured and post indentured community at its lowest ebb. Mona feminizes this despair and degradation in the figure of Baboonie, the "old beggar woman" who is repeatedly raped by the village men and spurned by all. In Canada, during a storm of freezing rain, ice pellets and wind howling through pine trees, Mona's memory throws up the sound of "rainwater pouring down the galvanized spouting of the house

Kanhai–Fire in de Cane

into the drain at the side” (108) and through that layer of sound, the voice of Baboonie insinuates itself. The voices of Mona’s parents arguing about Baboonie is another layer of sound, and then, more ominously, Mona hears “silent figures stalking through the night intent on one thing...Baboonie huddled in a corner, waiting for her assailants, cursing to protect herself. Baboonie subjected to the inevitable, a grunting, groaning man, a whole procession of them” (111). Raped by the community men, Baboonie appropriates the community’s most religious text to give her testimony. Her curses, intermingled with verses from the *Ramayana*, become her “holy” song. She sings, joining the chorus of the “rise and fall of women singing *Ramayana* at *kathas*” (112). And her words resonate with Mona thus,

The words were in Hindi and I knew only a few of them – *dhuniya, popo, beti, kala pani*. And there were others that I heard night after night and will never forget, their harshness ripping through earth and water and tearing up the air around me so that even breathing became fearful – *kangaal, parisahan, triskaar, thokna, parishan, parishan, parishan, parishan, ...pani, pani*. The voice rose and fell in harmony with the rain and river and wetness, *pani, pani, pani...* (112-113)

Etched in the memory of anyone who has lived in Central and South Trinidad are the sounds of women’s singing reverberating through the nights. The pundit drones and the women respond in songs that go deep into the ancestral memory, regenerating the fragile yet unbreakable swinging bridge between past and present, between spiritual and communal. Open air performances of sections of the *Ramayana*, read or sung in Hindi, were/are frequent and common-place in Trinidad. Even if fewer and fewer Indo Trinidadians understand the literal meaning of the words, they are repeated by rote and offer comfort at the emotional and spiritual level(s). In fact, as Kirk Meighoo explained, Hindi is a de facto second language in Trinidad, used by a significant proportion of the population, not officially declared as a second language, but alive in spaces such as homes, community gatherings, religious rituals and secularized performances.

The repetition of the word *pani*, repeated at significant junctures

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

in this novel, is the base drum upon which Indo Caribbean identity is built. *Pani*, literally translated as water, has multiple connotations: the relentlessness of pouring rain, the repetitive flooding of homes and fields as the Caroni River breaks its banks, the literal and metaphoric oceans that have been crossed, the tears that are swallowed and eventually burst their dams, streaming down in torrents. We see a people in distress, buffeted this way and that by the natural elements, by history, by violence from outside the home as well as within the home. The affirmation and struggle of survival is articulated by the rand, the woman at the bottom of the heap

crying through the night, crying through the rain, breaking up the classical words of the *Ramayana* with her own tales of exile and banishment, and in broken chords and unexpected riffs telling the story of a race. Of racial and tribal grief, of banishment, of test of purity. (113)

The phrase "test of purity" screams of the misogyny embedded in Hindu history and philosophy. The central conflict of the *Ramayana* revolves around Sita, the stolen wife of the epic hero, Rama, who must prove her purity. She has been in the company of Ravana, the embodiment of evil, and surely Ravana would have tried to seduce or rape her. Sita undergoes the ultimate test of walking through fire and emerges unscathed. Espinet's novel suggests that Indo Trinidadians look, not to Sita, the exalted queen, but to Baboonie, the old beggar woman as the illustration of female heroism. Baboonie's victimization and deprivation is the match to Sita's purity. Baboonie re-mixes the text of *Ramayana* so that it becomes her own "holy" story; thus redefining the meaning of "holy." This recognition of articulation through suffering is Mona's inspiration as she collaborates with her cousin, Bess, to research and document the history of Indians in Trinidad.

From Bess Mona hears the history of the family as one of cultural and ethnic cross-overs even as individuals showed respect for ethnic ancestry. She traces the ancestral Grandma Lil's love affair with a man of Euro Indian ancestry, himself the product of the plantation practice of white massa rape of indentured (or slave) woman. Yet it was the woman's responsibility to bestow respectability to the

Kanhai—Fire in de Cane

community through sexual virtue. Even when the twelve year old Mona is almost raped, her mother blames her lack of judgment for finding herself in a position where rape could take place. From the Indian widow/prostitute, to indentured woman raped in the fields, to Baboonie raped by the village men, to sexual attacks within the family, the novel traces a lineage of women struggling against sexual abuse to knit together family and community. The threads used in the knitting were their suffering, their hope, their resistance and their determination to forge a structure to protect each other. This structure can be seen as creolized since it draws on the various influences available. Creolization here is more than a cultural identity or a power-sharing strategy, it is an ethic that Mona learns from her female lineage and that she carries back and forth on the swinging bridges that she traverses. Speaking of the ongoing process to develop a system of ethics in the Caribbean, Lloyd Best explains how the ethical void of Caribbean history compelled its people to draw on cultural and religious affiliations for a vision of integration,

The policy of shipping people in merely to work and provide labor power was, oddly, haphazard and bereft of any effective ethos of integration until the cultural and religious resurgences that we have been groping towards since independence.

Best suggests that an ethic of integration is necessary in the Caribbean and this ethic is to be culled from disparate ancestries, so shadowed in misery and demoralization, through cultural and religious resurgences. Mona's return to Trinidad is framed within a time of resurgence for Hindu/Indians. As young girls Mona and her girlfriends resisted being "civilized" in games such as the Dirty Skirts Club where they secretly refused to wash their uniform skirts because of all that this uniform symbolized about the superiority of colonial Presbyterianism. The adult Mona realizes that generations before there were relatives who rebelled against the "prissiness of the Indian Presbyterian life with its hundreds of restrictions handed down by foreign missionaries" (287). As Brinda Mehta points out, Colonial school offer[ed] a ... pathology of confinement evidenced in the commodification and subsequent devalorizing of Indian-Caribbean culture and the incompatibility of colonial

education with ethnic traditions. (42)

However, Mona utilizes the same colonial education to liberate herself from its very clutches and by the time she returns to Trinidad, no longer does she feel shame about what is Indian and Hindu derived. She joins the wave of open celebration of the survival skills of the ancestors. Another swinging bridge must be constructed—this one to honor those made the first crossing. Mona takes it upon herself to assemble a family album, filling in the missing pages that were torn out either out of shame or disapproval. She excavates and translates the songs of Gainder, her rand ancestor who was forbidden to sing and dance by her Presbyterian preacher husband. “These songs were my bounty,” says Mona, “swinging open a doorway to another world, returning across the *kala pani* to the India the girl Gainder had left” (293). She plans a film of Gainder’s life.

Her cousin Bess is constructing a swinging bridge at the community level. She is working with a committee to establish a museum of Indo Trinidadian history, and while there is the inevitable squabbling, sexism, and other types of power play, Bess realizes that all are motivated by the pain of their shared history of marginalization and their determination to be self-defined. Indo Trinidadians have wrested the “right” to Trinidadian identity, and have reached a place of assimilation at their own pace. Says Bess, “You know how people talk about Trinidadian culture and another culture called Indian culture? So Trinidadian culture don’t have place for Indians too?” (285) She rails against and simultaneously sympathizes with Presbyterian families like her own who internalized hatred of their ancestral background, “They hate the history that marks them as coolies.” Continues Bess, “And why? Coolie people wasn’t people too?” At last, coolie has been reclaimed! And Bess does it in grand style, marking *Divali* celebrations¹⁷ in a public bazaar with pillars of lights within which are displayed artifacts of the early life of the immigrants such as the cooking styles and implements, songs mounted on creatively designed panels, and the intricate jewelry of Indian artists. It is fitting that the *Divali*, the festival of lights, is swinging bridge through which the public is invited to make this crossing in triumph and jubilation—not only because it is the symbolic triumph of “light” over “darkness,” but

because the celebration of *Divali* was a symbolic cultural/religious triumph against the forces of Christianization in the early days. From the onset, *Divali* was celebrated by Hindu villagers who made their own clay pots to be lit with cotton wicks soaked in coconut oil that they skimmed in their kitchens. Another cultural triumph was the declaration of *Divali* as a national holiday in Trinidad (and Guyana) where public religious festivals were historically Afro Christian. As the Hindu community has prospered, its prosperity was/is reflected in the increasing grandeur of *Divali* celebrations.

How does such “cultural triumph” contribute to understanding Caribbean identity as it continues to weave itself? One answer comes from Viranjini Munasinghe who concludes in her anthropological study of an Indo Trinidadian community,

If indeed Indian-Trinidadians have managed to realize their vision of a plural nation composed of many ethnicities, or possibly even begun establishing their own hegemony, then the rules of the game for claiming native status may have changed and the symbolic privilege of Creole may no longer carry the same valence. (282)

While I agree that Indo Trinidadians have dismantled the notion creole as the privileged status in the Caribbean, there is no indication of an Indo Trinidadian hegemony. The group’s ineffectiveness as a political force in Trinidad makes hegemony an unlikely scenario. In any case this novel does not advocate hegemony, it takes us to the poetic space of the swinging bridge which, by its very structure, is not conducive to hegemony.

A swinging bridge is a terrifying yet exhilarating experience, undertaken under extreme circumstances, and with a mixture of desperation, excitement, hope, and anxiety of the unknown. The travelers or “*jahajis*”¹⁸ might be coerced, or conditions on their side of the bridge may be so extreme that they undertake the crossing in spite of their anxiety. Implicitly, there are two locations and a man-made construction that connects both. The bridge is held up by such transparent filaments, “web-like” according to Espinet’s novel, that the fear of plunging into the abyss is always imminent. Underneath is the void—the bottomless pit. Who knows what lives in those unfathomable depths? The wind may swing the bridge in

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

unexpected directions, or someone can stand on firm ground and rock the bridge while the crossing is in process. The walkway of the bridge is made of thin slats of board, strung together with rope. Any knot in the rope can fray, any slat can be rotten. A slat may crumble underfoot. The traveler stops, paralyzed, unable to move forward or backward, yet, move s/he must, for the wind is blowing harder and colder, night is approaching, and voices are calling out from either end. The bridge is narrow and can only hold so many; sometimes it gets crowded and there is the chaos of simultaneous pushing and pulling. Did the traveler have to stand in line to get on the bridge? Was it a years' long journey on which s/he lost her way several times? What did she take for the journey? What was discarded in order to get access to the bridge? What fell over the side or through the slats in the process of the crossing? Were there robberies or assaults on the bridge? Travelers are hurt and dying before each other's eyes. They tell themselves stories and sing songs for the courage to continue. The journey must be made and each survivor is a celebration.

Notes

1 Macumba is an Afro Christian religion practiced in Brazil.

2 V.S. Naipaul, in an interview with Hilary Chadwick regarding his book *The Enigma of Arrival*.

3 A francophone creole term that literally translates as "everything." It suggests a collection of vastly different objects or activities, lumped together so that the expected and legitimate is placed together with the unexpected and the illegitimate.

4 From here on in this paper I will refer to Trinidadians of Indian ancestry as Indo Trinidadians; and use the term Afro Trinidadians to refer to Trinidadians of African ancestry.

5 Large numbers of Indians were brought to Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname, with smaller groups going to Jamaica, Grenada and Belize.

6 This is an ironic quantum leap from the Bhojpuri "Chinidad" meaning "land of sugar" to the name Trinidad, given by Columbus to commemorate the Christian Trinity.

7 Lepay: a practice brought from rural India of daubing earthen walls and floors

Kanhai–Fire in de Cane

with a muddy mixture of clay and cow dung.

8 African based religions were also illegal.

9 Bhojpuri was the dialect spoken by most indentured immigrants.

10 I am borrowing here from David Rudder's soca-calypso *The Ganges Has Met the Nile* that affirms Trinidadian identity as evolving from the Ganges (metaphorically India) and the Nile (metaphorically Africa.)

11 Chutney is "hot and spicy" Indo folk singing and performance.

12 Un-translatable chorus used in many chutney songs.

13 Nana = maternal grandfather; Nanee = maternal grandmother. These terms are also used to refer to Indian ancestors, implying respect, love and connection with indentureship.

14 I express thanks to Sheila Rampersad for this analysis in a telephone conversation.

15 Coolie was the derogatory term given to Indian immigrants and their descendants. Derived from the Tamil word "kuli" which means one who carries load, this term has been used by to stigmatize Indians and people of Indian descent long after many left plantation labor to become professionals, entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, etc.

16 Brahmin denoted upper caste, in contradiction to the commonly held opinion that most of the migrants were lower castes.

17 Divali is a Hindu religious festival.

18 Jahaji literally translates from Bhojpuri as traveler. Trini and Guyanese-Indians speak of the jahaji bundles which were brought from India, or the jahaji kin that were formed on board the ships that brought them to the Caribbean. It is a historical term that has become metaphoric, bordering on mythic.

References

Alexander, Jaqui M. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Best Lloyd, "Subverting Race Politics." *Trinidad Express*, July 16, 2006. Internet version.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Braithwaite, Kamau. *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica: 1770-1971*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

———. *Dreamstories*. London: Longman Group, 1998.

Bramley, Serge. *Macumba: The Teachings of Marie-Jose, Mother of the Gods*. New York: City Light Publisher, 1994.

Chadwick, Hilary. Interview with V.S. Naipaul in Association with R.M. Arts. Princeton: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2003.

Espinete, Ramabai. *The Swinging Bridge*. Toronto: Harper Perennial Canada, 2003.

———. "Barred." In Carmen C. Estevez & Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, *Green Cane, Juicy Flotsam: Short Stories by Caribbean Women*. Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Kanhai, Rosanne. "From Matikor to a Douglu Feminism." Lecture given at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, February 1999.

———. Ed. *Matikor: The Politics of Identity for Indo-Caribbean Women*. St. Augustine, Trinidad: UWI Continuing Studies Press, 1999.

———. *Rage and Renewal*. St. Augustine, Trinidad: UWI Continuing Studies Press, 2001.

———. *The Green Face Man*. St. Augustine, Trinidad: UWI Continuing Studies Press, 2007.

Meighoo, Kurt. "Language and the Afro-Saxon Self Contempt." *Trinidad Express*, July 27, 2005. Internet version.

Mehta, Brinda. *Diasporic (Dis)locations: Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the Kala Pani*. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004.

Mohammed, Patricia. *Gender Negotiations among Indians in*

Kanhai—Fire in de Cane

- Trinidad, 1917-1947. New York: Palgrave, 2002
- Munasinghe, Viranjini. *Callaloo or Tossed Salad: East Indians and the Cultural Politics of Identity in Trinidad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Naipaul, V.S. *The Enigma of Arrival*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987.
- . *A Way in the World*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1995.
- Popo, Sundar. "Mih Nana and Mih Nanee" unrecorded.
- Puri, Shalini. "Race, Rape and Representation: Indo-Caribbean Women and Cultural Nationalism." In *Kanhai, Matikor*, 238-82.
- . *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Rampersad, Sheila. "Phantoms of the Cane." In *Kanhai, The Green Face Man*, p. 2.
- Rudder, David. "The Ganges Has Met the Nile." *International Chantuelle*. New York: JW Productions, 1999.
- Ryan, Selwyn. *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.
- Singh, Kelvin. *Race and Class Struggles in a Colonial State: Trinidad 1917-1945*. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1994.
- Walcott, Derek. *Collected Poems 1948-1984*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984.
- Williams, Eric. "The Dangers Facing Trinidad and Tobago and the West Indian Nation." Speech at Woodford Square on April 1, 1958. Documented in *Ryan, Race and Nationalism*, 192.

**(IN)VISIBLE FISSURES AND THE
“MULTICULTURAL” AMERICAN:
Interrupting Race, Ethnicity, and Imperialism
through TV’s *Survivor***

**Sarah Hentges
University of Maine at Augusta**

The blood of the whole world’ flows through us. . . . We are not a narrow tribe.

— Herman Melville

. . . Cultural identities are pivotal in this time of social and cultural change in order to understand and intervene in the national consciousness. . . .

— Johnella E. Butler, “Ethnic Studies as a Matrix...”

The experience of our century tells us that the old orthodoxies, the traditional ideologies, the neatly tied bundles of ideas—capitalism, socialism, democracy—need to be untied, so that we can play and experiment with all the ingredients, add others, and create new combinations in looser bundles. We know as

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

we come to the twenty-first century that we desperately need to develop new, imaginative approaches to the human problems of our times.

— Howard Zinn, “Introduction: American Ideology”

Acts of going native certainly reveal white America’s aspirations to hegemony, most specifically through that society’s attempts to obliterate Native peoples, cultures, and histories. At the same time, though, other questions arise. To what extent does evoking “nativeness” destabilize notions of race, gender, and history which the dominant culture seeks to naturalize? . . . Do these complex workings of culture reveal the conflicts and fissures at the heart of an Americanness imagined as *e pluribus unum*? If so, perhaps in these contradictions lies the potential for decolonizing knowledge and accomplishing social change.

— Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*¹

One of the longest running reality TV shows, with 15 seasons as of 2007, *Survivor* is an important text for considerations of race and ethnicity, legacies of imperialism, and the idea of the “multicultural” America. *Survivor* provides an evolving adventure narrative—one that relies upon the legacies of the past, like colonialism and imperialism, as well as the myths of the present and future, like tourism as a means of survival in a globalized economy. As these imperial contexts are adapted *Survivor* provides moments for (mostly white or white-identified) privileged, “multicultural” first-world Americans to participate in neo-colonial cultural and economic imperialism and cultural tourism—all from the comforts of our living rooms. While participation in American imperialism and televisual cultural tourism are certainly problematic, such participation can also be disruptive of simplistic notions of American culture, economics, politics, and identities and can tell us much about the ways in which ideas about race are “sold” by the show and interrupted and negotiated by its racialized contestants.

An important part of this racialization and legacy of imperialism is embodied and evolved through the American frontier fantasy

described by critics who argue that in times of crisis, imperial dreams are played and replayed in American culture and the imagination of the colonizer.² This legacy is extended in “Self-Help for Savages: The ‘Other’ Survivor, Primitivism, and the Construction of American Identity” by Steven Vrooman (2003). In his article in *Survivor Lessons* Vrooman offers a compelling analysis of the first two seasons of *Survivor* and the ways in which the contestants were portrayed in ways that perpetuated the blatant racism of the adventure story legacy where the white man is portrayed as superior to the “Other.” In the first season, racial politics are constructed and portrayed solely from within the pool of (mostly white) contestants, while in the second season the natives of the Australian Outback also provided this comparison. As Vrooman notes, “by *Survivor: Thailand* [season 5], the show is awash with primitives.” (2003; 196) Vrooman connects this presence of the Other to the therapeutic, “self-help” function of the show for its contestants and viewers. He concludes that *Survivor* is, ultimately, a bad example of the adventure story as self-help. However, *Survivor* is steeped not simply in a history of American adventure stories, but also, for instance, legacies like world’s fairs which promote the white man’s “self-help” need to define himself through the Other as well as through his economic, political, and cultural exploitation. Such legacies of colonialism and imperialism necessitate the appeal of shows like *Survivor* that carry on these traditions in more contemporary and “justified” ways. These traditions, these “enacted rites of conquest” are used by the U.S. as Shari Huhndorf explains, to “extend its power over Native America . . . and these racial dynamics continue to shape contemporary American life.” (2001; 15) But what Vrooman fails to articulate, is that the self-help angle is not needed to tell us how to be Americans.³ *Survivor* does this obviously, but also in more convoluted and contradictory ways, particularly as the show provides a powerful means for white America to do what Huhndorf describes as to “go native”—to act out the “Other”—which “articulates and supports other forms of imperial, gender, and racial domination within the broader American culture as well.” (2001; 15) The “Other”, thus, takes many forms and is juxtaposed against the power and privilege of

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

the “multicultural” (read: assimilated) American citizen—a loaded and propagated identity in post-9/11 America. But, as *Survivor* contestants perpetuate new forms of imperialism they also disrupt the character of such imperialism by interrupting essentialized models of race and racialization in ways that, perhaps, allow us to “understand and intervene in the national consciousness,” to “play and experiment” with ideas of identity, culture, and power, and to “decolonize[e] knowledge and accompl[ish] social change.” (epigraph)

The challenges are most effectively constructed through the gaps and fissures contestants and producers have little or no control over. In these invisible and visible fissures, ideas about race, ethnicity, nationality, and imperialism are constructed and negotiated. By reconsidering *Survivor’s* relationship to past and present legacies of imperialism and the importance these legacies hold for American culture, identity, and hegemony we can see how these legacies are complicated and contradictory. Further, considered as a whole, evolving text—especially in relationship to the contours of American ideology and politics—*Survivor* provides an imaginary world that tells us much about ourselves. For instance, as questions about U.S. involvement in Iraq infiltrated the public consciousness, *Survivor* provided the Palau setting, what host, Jeff Probst, described as an “island paradise,” a “remote and absolutely breathtaking” area of the Pacific, and “one of the most spectacular natural wonders of the world.” Not coincidentally, this “island paradise” is also described as a “watery grave” and is littered with the man-made remnants of WWII. Probst describes this as “an eerie mix of man’s explosive past and nature’s power to reclaim.” America’s hegemonic past, embodied in the scattered, rusting machines and weapons of WWII, creates a guilt-free narrative of America’s past triumphs—the inevitable outcome of a cultural, economic, and military superiority. Thus, Palau’s people and its history are not simply erased (and later paraded); they are subsumed by American hegemony. Hidden behind this “island paradise” is the fact that Palau’s official currency is the U.S. dollar, English is the official and predominant language, and tourism is its prime industry. Another season of *Survivor* (Fiji) provided a rich/

poor dichotomy, and the Cook Islands brought American ideas of race and ethnicity to the forefront. Most recently, as fear over China's growing economic power have surfaced in the public consciousness, *Survivor: China* reminds us of U.S. superiority in a variety of ways.

Part of this exploration of *Survivor's* role in promoting and interrupting legacies of imperialism and the social and cultural construction of race looks at how the idea of "survival" is sold through staged and constructed images and ideas about indigenous peoples and the lands they only partially inhabit. Another part is how *Survivor* sells race by exploiting racialized individuals and groups at the same time that these individuals and groups challenge both exploitation and racialization. Most of all, this piece considers how race is interrupted and contested, which requires that we understand at least some of the complexities of "race" in an American context that extends across time and place.

Beyond the Adventurer: A Legacy of Imperialism

In "On the Raggedy Edge of Risk," Bruce Braun notes the difference between those who "have the resources and the security to *take* risks, and those who are instead continuously positioned at risk (or imagined to be so)." (2003; 177)⁴ The risk culture that Braun describes is intimately connected to whiteness and racialization which reveals different dimensions to the racism that Vrooman begins to articulate. For instance, Braun argues that "many of today's ideologies of nature" retain "'hidden attachments'" to frontier ideologies and other "imaginative geographies." (2003; 196-7)⁵ Vrooman describes these frontier ideologies in depth, but only partially compares them to the function of the "imaginative geographies" of *Survivor*. These settings are, according to host, Jeff Probst, settings "we can all understand—a remote tropical island, a bunch of Americans making a world and then destroying their world by voting each other out one by one." In this way, not only is the "third-world" subject erased, but in a sweep of "imperialist nostalgia," the first-world subject's power as colonizer is reinforced.⁶ After all, the Americans on *Survivor*, despite their location, are "making a world" and it is perfectly within their

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

rights, according to a colonial model, not only to create, but to then destroy that world in a mad, individualistic, greedy dash. Toward these ends, the show constructs its setting from its own first-world location, with exoticized titles like “The Outback,” “The Amazon,” “Africa,” and “China” that erase cultural and geographic specificity. Other subtitles play up romantic attachments like “The Pearl Islands,” with its pirate themes or “Marquesas” with its frequent references to cannibalism. All of these are romanticized and exoticized locations with violent colonial pasts and are often current sites of contestation regarding issues of development, land-use, and sovereignty. For instance, the indigenous of Australia were not consulted prior to *Survivor*’s arrival⁷; however, the indigenous of Vanuatu and Palau participate in what appears to contestants and audiences to be pure authenticity—sharing rituals and traditions. Further, all of these locations are marginalized within the global economic system and rely mostly upon various kinds of tourism, including the televisual tourism (and advertising) that *Survivor* provides, for economic and cultural survival.⁸ Thus, *Survivor* locations are often decontextualized and disconnected from the region’s past, but they are also re-asserted as a tourist location through reward challenges and the show’s televisual form itself. This places them squarely within imperial legacies and the neo-colonial contours of the contemporary political economy.

Another “hidden attachment” in *Survivor* is to the legacies of world’s fairs that critics like Robert Rydell and Shari Huhndorf describe. Thus, *Survivor* becomes a more disturbing cultural phenomenon as we consider the ways in which the Other and colonialism and imperialism were presented to the fair-goers at the turn of the century—a period when the contradictions between American’s ideals of freedom and liberty for all were in stark contrast to its lust for colonial territories. In these days, world’s fairs “were rites of passage for American society which made possible the full acceptance of a new way of life, new values, and a new social organization.” (Rydell 1993; 15-18, quoting Victor Turner) These new ways of life not only meant accepting and even embracing empire, but they also meant accepting violence and subjugation of the “other” in exchange for a “culture of imperial abundance.”

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

(Rydell 1993; 18, 20)

Since we are now living this imperial future, an assumed inevitability is seen as forward progress, and shows like *Survivor* are more easily able to parade the “other” in many of the same ways as the colonized “other” was displayed at world’s fairs. This parading and display go beyond the tales of adventurer since these displays brought the adventure into the “first world.” Further, these displays embody the assumed place of white Americans as culturally and economically superior. And since, as Rydell argues, the exhibits were to be viewed from a comfortable spatial and ideological distance, “millions of Americans [got] first-hand experience with treating non-whites from around the world as commodities.” (22) Thus, it is normal for the natives to be paraded in traditional costumes as much as it is for them to be erased by kitsch representations.⁹ On *Survivor*, the natives often perform a dance or a ceremony for the winner of a *Survivor* reward challenge. In most cases the Survivors sit and watch indigenous dances, rituals, or natural wonders (usually while eating a spectacular meal). Rarely do the contestants join in the dance like two reward winners did on *Survivor: Marquesas*. Nor do they offer to share their “reward” with their Native “tour guide” as Julie and Chris (Vanuatu) illustrate on their horseback adventure as the “other” instructs and then watches from a distance as they feast. Instead, the juxtaposition between the first world subject as subject and the third-world subject as object becomes one of those “hidden attachments” that Braun describes.

As blatant as this cultural imperialism may seem, according to an interview with Jeff Probst regarding the Vanuatu season, *Survivor* doesn’t simply *take* from its locations. He states:

We try to follow the rules, we brought them in a lot of money and we utilized what they had, we were buying their time and their land. We tend to leave a place better than where we found it. We built a church and left money to finish that. I adopt a family everywhere we go and keep in touch with them, as long as we don’t misrepresent them.¹⁰

Such generosity is certainly consistent with imperialism and colonialism as Probst claims that they “tend to leave a place better than when we found it.” Not only does this “finding” connote the

Hentges–(In) Visible Fissures

attitude of the discoverer, but the disconnect between what has been “found” and what has been “left” are detached from what was found and left in the past. Further, money is used as the justification for “buying their time and their land” and “utilizing what they had” could mean a lot of different things. The fact that Probst “adopts” a family “everywhere [they] go” only further reinforces the show’s paternalism and individualistic approach. What kind of impacts might a cast and crew of hundreds, technological accoutrements, and other impacts have on peoples whose only resources include their “time and their land”?

American “Survival” and the “Authentic” Other

Although *Survivor* invokes the difference between travel and tourism, sight-seeing and adventure, and comfort and risk most often the *Survivor* contestants are posed starkly against the “other” even as they are allowed some level of “authentic” participation. Contestants are far from the comfort of travel or sight-seeing, but they also cannot fully “go native,” because they obviously lack the skills to do so. Ironically and predictably, *Survivor* contestants most often lack even the most basic skills they need to survive (and those with the skills are often voted out quickly, targeted as “too much competition”). This lack of survival skills only reinforces the contestants’ first-world status, and reveals their ignorance. For instance, on *Survivor: Africa* one team dumped the water out of their clay pots (instead of drinking it) so that they wouldn’t have to carry the weight on their hike to their camp.¹¹ Perhaps more telling is the fact that escape is always possible for *Survivor* contestants in a variety of ways. So, for instance, when Michael (The Outback) passed out and fell into the fire, burning his hands and face, a helicopter was quickly dispatched and he was eliminated from the game. And when Osten (Pearl Islands) decided he couldn’t take it anymore, he was able to leave the game, but only after Jeff and his tribe-mates ridiculed him for his choice to be the first *Survivor* to quit. These instances of escape further distance the contestants from the people who inhabit these spaces and have no means (and, perhaps, in some cases no desire) to physically escape, let alone permanently or temporarily (or mentally) escape their real

circumstances of survival.

Because contestants are unable to embody the presence or skill of the indigenous peoples in these more “real” situations, particularly as opposed to the kitsch embodiments, *Survivor* cannot sublimate all traces of violent, colonial and imperialistic histories as much as it can try to control and frame them within new age contexts and demonstrations of first-world cultural superiority (especially in economic and material terms). For instance, the invocation of “nativeness” that Huhndorf describes as “going native,” will sometimes allow the privileged first-world subject attempts to erase the colonial past (and thus ease his white guilt) by holding up “Native” traditions and indigenous cultures as “better” than Western culture—as an alternative, or even a remedy, to the West.¹² In other cases, there is a certain level of “authenticity” to these inclusions of indigenous peoples and customs, but these are difficult to distinguish from the kitsch. For instance, the “gross food” challenges often include local fare like grubs, worms, and a variety of meats or, in the case, of *Survivor: Africa*, a sacred drink made from a combination of cow urine, blood, and milk. These gross food challenges appear on a variety of reality TV game shows like *Road Rules* and *Fear Factor*, but only on *Survivor* are these challenges “authentic,” as they are intimately connected to the food that the indigenous people of the region survive on.¹³ The food is not “gross” simply because it has been chosen by the producers; it is also “gross” because it is foreign, other, raw, and primitive. This “grossness” is further accentuated by this food’s juxtaposition with American favorites won in reward challenges like Doritos and Mountain Dew, Pringles and Mai Tais, donuts, pizza, and chocolate and peanut butter. On *Survivor: China* several contestants won an authentic Chinese meal—endless meat and vegetables—and later complained about how they “suffered” through this meal because of their lack of familiarity. What they really wanted, one *Survivor* remarked, was pizza. Thus, Americans are further defined by what they will and will not eat, as well as by what they prefer to eat.¹⁴

Perhaps most revealing of American privilege, is the fact that contestants know that they will have to brave the elements, but they also know that they will be provided with chances to win luxuries.

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

These luxuries appear in the form of food, pampering, sight-seeing, and for one or two lucky *Survivors*, a car. These luxuries are always in stark contrast with the weathered, dirty *Survivor* contestants, as well as their “primitive” surroundings. In some cases Jeff drives the car prize right onto the beach, and on *Survivor: Vanuatu* Eliza drove her and her guests to dinner and a movie. These luxuries reinforce the larger scope of capitalism as American symbols of capitalism are centered. For instance, while food must be scavenged from the land, it is also purchased by contestants as a part of the reward challenges—sometimes with cash (like during the food auctions), with local currency like on *The Pearl Islands*, and other times with Jeff Probst’s Visa card. These reward challenges allow one of the show’s sponsors (Visa), and a symbol of capitalism run rampant (the credit card), prime product placement, as well as reinforcement of its necessity in everyday life (not just for luxury).¹⁵ The fact that *Survivor* contestants can use Jeff’s credit card in even the most remote places on earth, is simply more proof that U.S. capitalism is alive and well in its inevitable influence as an arm of U.S. imperialism. Here the individual and the collective—the consumer and capitalism—are part and parcel.

In all of these cases of “survival,” cultural superiority is an acceptable excuse for both producers and viewers since this superiority is ingrained within an American ideology, identity, and culture that relies upon the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Because of these authentic/staged exhibitions of culture, an American consumer of *Survivor* can easily marvel in awe and amazement at *Survivor*’s portrayal’s of indigenous peoples, customs, and locations, and they can appreciate these images guilt free. Like the past, the islands of the present are also presented as ripe for the taking. As Huhndorf argues, “culture . . . serves as the means of creating the necessity for dominating other groups even as it justifies this dominance.” (2001; 12) We are taking these islands and their peoples not militarily (though this is not improbable), but through culture and economy. These dynamics of “authenticity” and an imperial past/present clearly sell the racial, cultural, and economic superiority of the “multicultural” American.

(In)Visible Fissures: The “Multicultural” American

Each season, *Survivor* contestants are split evenly between men and women (and often between young and old), which offers a numerical gender equality, but also reinforces our narrow ideas about gender roles and representations (which are further contested as women’s ability to compete and to survive opens fissures in these mainstreamed representations)¹⁶. This equality would seem to suggest other kinds as well; however, amongst these men and women, there are, at most, three Americans per season who represent marginalized races, ethnicities, sexualities, and abilities. Thus, throughout the first twelve seasons there were several African American contestants—usually one man and one woman per season, often on the same “tribe”—a few Asian American contestants, two “differently-abled” contestants (both white), and few openly gay or lesbian contestants (all white). Through this “diversity,” an uncritical conceptualization of American multiculturalism is perpetuated as the crisis of non-white American identities are subsumed under a larger umbrella. The white, black, Asian, or Latino/a American is considered a part of what one lay critic considers “the first new TV show in years to generate something like a common cultural experience across the United States.” In fact, this critic goes as far as to claim that on the first season fourteen white Americans and two black Americans constitute a “geographically and ethnically diverse” group of “castaways.” (Streisand 2000) And another critic considers diversity in “age, experience, and background” as well as “race, religion, and sexuality,” as providing “plenty of interesting conflict.” (Godard 2003 quoting Denhart, 82)

But even amongst this limited version of “diversity,” the diverse American “others” are still often white, politically and ideologically if not visually. Thus, it is necessary to complicate “whiteness” within the context of *Survivor*. In this context whiteness becomes connected to and disconnected from “American” identity through Americans’ first-world status, particularly through Americans’ roles as consumers as well as their juxtaposition to the presence and absence of “others,” as I have described thus far. And the “American” values of competition, greed, and individualism represent whiteness on *Survivor* as much as skin color, at least in

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

most cases.¹⁷ Thus, political “whiteness” becomes the lens through which this show is presented and, often, consumed. Further, people of color who exhibit these characteristics, like Equity Trade Manager, Osten (Pearl Islands), who encourages his female teammates to use their sexuality to barter with the “horny old men” in a small fishing village off the coast of Panama, apply for and are chosen for *Survivor*, just like the white contestants are. In this way, “multicultural” space is connected with American ideas of equal opportunity and democracy as well as ideas about capitalism and nationalism, and structures like patriarchy and heteronormativity. In this “multicultural” context, *Survivor* does what Karen Mary Davalos describes: it articulates a certain version of nationalism by “representing the ideologies that make nationalism a success, specifically, patriarchy, homophobia, and essentialist visions of ‘race.’” (2001; 59) However, gaps interrupt these narratives, if only sometimes. Thus, Americans are, ironically, presented as they are seen by many “othered” peoples—as “white” despite their American-defined, visually or culturally determined, race or ethnicity.¹⁸ These elements, even as they change and evolve, strictly reinforce an American identity, ideology, and culture. In these ways, whiteness is positioned as more than a visible identity. After all, the first-world subject is “diverse,” even if *Survivor* provides an inadequate, though commonplace, version of “diversity.”

However “diverse” *Survivor* contestants may (or may not) be, such uncritical multiculturalism erases the violence not only of the internal history of the U.S. and its imperialism thrust upon the “other” abroad, but also the continuous struggles of minority groups to gain more than superficial “multicultural” inclusion in American culture, economics, and politics.¹⁹ And because black, white, Latina, and Asian American contestants are pitted against each other in the ultimate game of survival, what binds them together as Americans is their difference(s) from their surroundings, and their desire for the million dollar prize. They are a “tribe” of American *Survivors*, but they are also individuals playing a game for the monetary prizes, and the other prizes that also come along with their fifteen minutes of fame. This is the “common cultural experience” that *Survivor* provides—a space where Americans can compete for the

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

ultimate title of sole Survivor from within an evolving legacy of the adventurer. Thus, despite Bruce Braun's argument that "to place the black or Latina subject in the frame, as the adventurer, would produce a kind of crisis within the ideological fields . . .," (Braun 2003; 199) the black or Latina on Survivor is placed squarely within the frame of American adventurer and American individualism. This identity both cements and undermines notions of American identity as whites, blacks, Asians, and Latinos/as are implicated in a legacy of American whiteness which "articulates and supports other forms of imperial, gender, and racial domination within the broader American culture as well." (Huhndorf 2001; 15) However, even this legacy is challenged to a certain extent. For instance, in the first fifteen seasons not only has Survivor seen almost as many women win as men, it has also seen an African American and a Latina winner (both women, Vecepia and Sandra) and an Asian American man (Yul) and African American man (Earl) win. In fact, Earl won every vote on the jury. In these cases, as well as in smaller examples, the legacy of the white, male adventurer is significantly (though not consistently) challenged.²⁰ And in this challenge there is also a challenge to "multicultural" American ideology, identity, and culture.

The thirteenth season of Survivor provided a "twist" that brought discussions of "ethnicity" to the forefront of the show. Perhaps because of slumping ratings, or the fact that about eighty percent of the people who apply to be on the show are white, the thirteenth season of Survivor purposefully attempted to include a more diverse cast.²¹ But despite Survivor's hype about dividing tribes along the lines of "ethnicity," it is race and not ethnicity that divides these tribes. The language chosen to describe tribal divisions is telling: Latino, Asian American, African American, and Caucasian. These are not ethnic groups; they are racial groups, a fact that can be most clearly seen in the Latino and Asian American tribes which include several different ethnicities. The Latino tribe reflects this racial category through the contestants' whiteness—all three of the men can "pass" as white and no contestants reflect the visual markers of indigenous or African ancestry that is part of the Latino umbrella. (In fact, this omission reinforces these racial

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

categories and, once again, erases Native Americans who not only don't have a tribe, but are also not represented within any of the tribes. The indigenous who are so often evoked during the show are once again erased from the American context.) On the second episode, only the Latina women speak Spanish (but only in a brief instance) when they plot against the men and both women embody the stereotypical Latina image that is rampant throughout American media and popular culture (brown hair, brown eyes, light brown skin). However, in this tribe we also experience some of the contradictions that these racial groups create. For instance, Billy talks about his Dominican parents paddling away from an island and wonders if he must be crazy as he is now paddling back to an island. He also remarks how well he thinks his team will do since they are all from geographical regions similar to the tropical islands where they will "survive." However, not only does Billy reflect his own ignorance about the diversity of "his people," but he also disproves his own stereotypes as it quickly becomes clear to his tribe mates that Billy has no idea how to survive on an island and that his laziness will not help to dispel the stereotypes so many of his tribe mates set out to disprove. And on the second episode, where he is voted out, Billy remarks more than once that his culture is "heavy metal" and that he would have been much better off if he was on the heavy metal tribe instead of the Latino tribe.

These differences of ethnicity are seen less in the Caucasian and African American tribes, both of which reflect the ways in which these racial categories have suppressed difference even as they don't reveal the historical processes of racialization that have caused such racial cohesion. But some of these historical processes are just below the surface. For instance, one member of the African American tribe describes her tribe as five "city kids"—a fact that reflects the legacies of American segregation as much as their lack of knowledge and ability for island "survival," even if these associations are not at the immediate surface of the narrative. Further, this tribe more than any other tribe, has the pressure to represent their people against the stereotypes that have been propagated through racist American culture, including past seasons of *Survivor*. This tribe also reveals the ways in which

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

gender tensions can play out within a racially cohesive group. When the tribe loses the first immunity challenge they have to send someone to exile. Immediately the two men step away from the women and discuss who they will send. They make their decision and step back to their team to announce the decision—a move that Jeff comments on immediately. Clearly annoyed, the women let the men have their moment of power. Later they vote off Sekou in the hopes that without his headstrong leadership the team will function better as a unit. This fissure—when gender dynamics supercede racial dynamics—is one type of fissure that interrupts dominant narratives.

Despite *Survivor*'s lack of attention to the complex issues behind all of its plot lines, competitions, characterizations, and product placements, the producers cannot contain all the dimensions of the game or the characters' identities or interactions. They cannot make people's identities—their race, class, gender, and sexuality—disappear. Thus, these gaps can also, potentially, do what Shari Huhndorf poses: "destablilize the notions of race, class, gender, and history which the dominant culture seeks to naturalize." (14, epigraph) The differences that have exploded from gaps of race, gender, and sexuality in subsequent seasons, have made for interesting, explosive material for the show, but has left little room for reflection within the confines of the show. All of these differences of race, class, gender, and sexuality may do more to cement ideas about race than they do to interrupt these ideas.²² However, they also help us to realize the range of American identities. The identities that don't fit into preconceived categories for "multicultural" Americans begin to challenge the ways in which *Survivor* sells race. Fissures where class, gender, or sexuality disrupt this narrative provide one means and contradictions and interruptions in constructed ideas of race and ethnicity provide another.

(In)Visible Fissures: Interrupting Whiteness through Race and Ethnicity

Because the invested producers of reality TV still have much control (cultural and economic capital) over who appears on these

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

shows, their choices often correspond to “character types” and to audience demand (or perceived audience demand). And these types are often organized and packaged, and they are clear both to audiences and to the contestants themselves. As Ziauddin Sardar writes, “there is nothing ordinary about these ‘ordinary people’; they have been carefully selected, selectively edited and expertly packaged.”²³ They are what the fans/consumers want and expect. And, as Vrooman and others argue, the contestants on subsequent *Survivor* seasons have watched the show and are not simply there to win the million dollars, but to have the “Survivor experience”—in some cases, a real experience they are not always prepared to survive. Despite Jeff Probst’s claims that season thirteen is different in that many contestants have not watched the show and are just “up for the adventure,” these more ethnically and racially diverse Americans are still selected, edited, and packaged. They still represent American “diversity” and dialogs and conflicts about “ethnicity” are highlighted by editors and producers making such issues impossible to ignore. Further, *Survivor*’s ability to “sell” us essentialized ideas of race or ethnicity are interrupted not only by its own contradictions, or through the contradictions of its characterization, but also by those contradictions within the “multicultural” American experience that cannot be contained, measured, or fully explained. After all, as Huhndorf argues, “the dominant culture’s ways of seeing are by no means natural or inevitable,” (13) even in such tightly controlled and edited spaces.

Thus, what the producers have less control over are the “burning topics that conventional programming treats as unmentionable—like class, status, success, and, of course, money.” Tom Carson continues, “in its relentlessly shoddy, callous way, reality TV is filling a considerable gap. . . . [It] exposes the class distinctions that the rest of the medium sweeps under America’s magic carpet.” (2003) The gaps, especially those related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, are forced open, even when the producers might want to keep them closed. But these gaps, in many cases, are still only as subversive as the mainstream will allow. Some gaps make for great TV material and some provide more progressive ideas about (American) identity, but they do not challenge the shows’ tenants

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

of racism, patriarchy, nationalism, and colonialism. For instance, one way notions of, for instance, gender and race are reified is through the patriarchal expression of (especially young, white female) bodies. Camera angles, hot weather, and strategy allow for plenty of opportunities to expose (mostly white) skin in contrast to the present/absent bodies of the natives.²⁴ Contestants also play right along, like when Jenna and Heidi (Marquesas) stripped for chocolate and peanut butter during one of the challenges or when they told the camera that the older women on the island were jealous of their “better bodies.”²⁵

In some cases, black bodies also provide opportunities for exploitation, but with far different historical baggage. For instance, like Braun writes of the black body (and its citationality) in the pages of adventure magazines, Osten (The Pearl Islands) was often on display in similar positions and postures that recall “the visual economies of slavery.” (2003; 184)²⁶ After selling all of his clothes for the sake of his team, this corporate drone was left in only his boxer briefs, which he could hardly keep on his body. Again and again Osten was on display, though often pixelled out. Further, as a young, muscular, black man, his team relied on him for strength and stamina in reward and immunity challenges. And again, and again, the tribe was defeated, which began to defeat Osten’s self-confidence. In one of these failures Osten buckles under the weight of an increasingly heavier pole supported on his upper back and neck—a pose reminiscent of an auction block—and his teammate goes on to secure the victory. This failure leaves Osten exposed for the predominantly white viewers to evaluate “the body of the other in terms of quality and value,” (Braun 2003; 184) especially since he is outperformed by his older, white teammate. However, despite Osten’s displays of (black) masculinity, he blamed his body for his desire to leave the game on his own terms. He didn’t think winning/“surviving” was as important as his health, which he felt was in jeopardy. Osten’s decision was made at the awe and disgust of his tribe mates and host, Jeff Probst, who couldn’t understand why he would quit. However, several (white) women on different seasons have expressed desire to leave and have not been ridiculed in the same ways that Osten was, which reinforces stereotypical

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

ideas about masculinity and black masculinity.²⁷ And further, no one could understand the subversive nature of Osten's decision—why should he sacrifice his health to play a game? Perhaps Osten's quitting wasn't so much a surrender as it was a refusal to play the white man's "game" once again.²⁸

Another example of contradiction and interruption of imperial legacies can be seen through Sandra on *Survivor: The Pearl Islands*. When the contestants are let loose in a local fishing village Sandra, fluent in Spanish, is able to barter for her team. While the other tribe acts like typical Americans arguing, rushing, overpaying, under planning, and being rude and ignorant—her team leaves for their island well-fed and well-equipped. In this case, Sandra's ability to relate to the natives gives her team a huge advantage initially and she is praised by her teammates for her ability to speak "the language." While this seems to be a rare *Survivor* moment, the way in which this plays out may suture the gaps that are opened since Sandra's Spanish is never featured again, and she goes on to win the ultimate game of *Survivor* without needing this tool. Further, Sandra may have spoken "the language," but this language is really the language of the colonizer. Thus, some could argue that Sandra was really acting like Columbus as she, a first-world American, came strutting into this small fishing village and plunders their food, literally providing gold in its place. The fact that Sandra had been colonized in the past and is now working as an "insider" agent for the colonizer is obscured. However, she is also presented as a sneaky saboteur later when she finds subversive ways to punish her tribe for voting out people she had alliances with—like throwing out fish that Rupert caught before being voted off and planning to hide tools and dishes until her inevitable end, which becomes not a vote out, as she expected, but enough votes to win a million dollars. So, in one aspect of the show Sandra is a hero—her brown skin and Spanish language skills give her and her team an advantage. But when the going gets rough, Sandra is portrayed through negative stereotypes—as a sneaky saboteur. But, then, she ends up the ultimate *Survivor*. While this example of a gap may or may not provide the reader with all of the nuances described above, it does interrupt the seamless narrative of the American

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

adventurer, and thus the American subject, as white and male.²⁹

Survivor does not paint American identity as racially or ethnically monolithic, but rather as individual Americans whose differences make them a “tribe” despite their differences, and make them competitors because of their similarities. On season 13, when the previously segregated tribes merge, race is again at the forefront as Jeff says that it’s time to “integrate” and each contestant must pick someone from a different tribe, and thus a different “ethnicity,” to be on their new tribe. Since most don’t know each other’s names yet, one member of the Caucasian tribe picks “the sister on the end” while most everyone else avoids such loaded language. And later, when the tribe members start plotting, one of the white men tries to convince an old tribe mate (through patronizing language) to vote with him and two of “the Asians.” This “integration,” is also used to reinforce the “multicultural” American dream. As the newly integrated tribes get to know each other, Nate (the only African American male left in the game) remarks that “it’s like they took us out of the ghetto and took us to Bel Air.” Stephannie, not coincidentally, engages her new tribe in conversation about how they felt being segregated. After the Caucasian members say it was “weird” and one then remarks that “good or bad it makes people think” Stephannie is shown in an interview saying, “you really don’t see color.” Of course it is crucial to the audience’s understanding of “multicultural” America that a black woman say this just as it is key that one of the white women says, “We’re back to America. We’re a melting pot. I love it.” All of this attention to race also spurs conversation in on-line forums and at the proverbial water cooler. For instance, when an Asian American contestant, Yul, finds the hidden immunity idol on the second episode he is compared to the great white Terry from the previous season. In one on-line forum discussion about this comparison a fan writes: “yul is awesome. hes my favorite from this season. before i was rooting for a white person to win just so everyone will be pissed off but i have such a respect for yul that he has to be my favorite. GO YUL!!!!”³⁰ If Survivor offers stereotypes and renewed “multicultural” versions of imperialism, then it also provides material for individuals and groups to begin to challenge essentialized versions of race and

Hentges–(In) Visible Fissures

ethnicity. Who is this “everyone” that would be “pissed off” if a white person won? At the very least, conversations about race are brought into mainstream American television in complex ways.

To return to the quotes I began with, it is important to consider how shows like *Survivor* can be used to accomplish social change and to envision “new imaginative approaches.” The “human problems of our times” are deeply implicated in imperial histories as well as in the modern contours of the globalized political economy. Since popular culture is such a powerful transmitter of these values and can sustain them across time and circumstance, shows like *Survivor* that replay these values and sustain them for capitalistic and imperial futures are key sites of intervention in larger systems of social, cultural, and political control. The ways in which we might disrupt, let alone restructure cultural, political, and economic systems are not as easy as we might like them to be, thus they are of the utmost concern for cultural critics and theorists, despite some skepticism regarding the potential transformative power of popular culture, let alone reality TV.³¹ We are not a “narrow” tribe even if our “tribe” is still marked by differences in power and privilege. The gaps that surface in American “multicultural” identity may allow us to think about new, more fluid ways to understand American culture and the role of the U.S. in the global political economy. There are many possible ways in which we can interrupt, intervene, decolonize, and play and experiment, not only to affect reality TV and U.S. culture, but dominant patterns and paradigms as well. These ways are not, of course, limited strictly to reality TV or popular culture; this is only one front where national consciousness is constructed and contested. The ways in which I have contextualized and critiqued *Survivor* here are only a small disruption which may help us to “understand and intervene in the national consciousness” and “create new combinations in looser bundles.” This oppositional disruption is ultimately a function of both literal and figurative survival.

Notes

1 Melville as quoted by Ronald Takaki in *Iron Cages*; Butler (2001); Zinn (1991); Huhndorf (2001)

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

2 See, for instance, Shari Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the Cultural Imagination*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2001); Karen Mary Davalos, *Exhibiting Mestizaje: Mexican (American) Museums in the Diaspora*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001) and Robert Rydell. *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993)

3 Vrooman fails to fully consider the complexity of “American” identity and ideology as well as the contemporary implications of *Survivor*’s historical legacies and its implications in a post-9/11 America. In many ways, this was not an argument he could fully make at the time that his article went to press, but it is an argument he begins to make, mostly by considering *Survivor*’s decline in self-help narratives.

4 Braun also notes the difference between “embodied” and “virtual” risk, following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1988). In this distinction he notes the “racial discourse” that connects the white subject to adventure travel “while the ‘virtual’ belongs properly to the poor, racialized subject whose relation to the world is thought to be completely mediated, passive, and lazy.” (201) While this is true of Braun’s discussion of “risk culture,” considering the role of the reality television show in U.S. culture, this “divide” is muddled.

5 Braun notes that he borrow this term from Edward Said (1994) and notes, “see also: Derek Gregory (1995).” Other critics have done important work toward these ideas like Ella Shohat.

6 Huhndorf, citing Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*, connects “imperialist nostalgia” to the phenomenon of “going native.” (76)

7 Before filming *Survivor 2: The Outback*, the “indigenous owners of the land. . . were not consulted”; further, the Aborigines who appeared “in kangaroo skins and wielding spears were paid under-award wages” (Cooper). This is certainly not the only case where *Survivor* has taken advantage of loose international laws, corrupt governments, U.S. economic and political clout, or desperate post-colonial peoples. Further, *Survivor*’s technical requirements alone require accommodations for over 300 people and the production crews regularly use power boats and helicopters, even in the most remote areas.

8 One notable example, as previously mentioned, is China. However, tourism is still employed as, for instance, *Survivors* dine and camp overnight on the Great Wall of China.

9 As Braun notes, this role of entertainer is a typical role for the “Other” in a variety of contexts. And as Shari Huhndorf argues, gazing upon “displays of nativeness” viewers find “both entertainment and confirmation of white America’s dominance.” (201)

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

10 Interview w Jeff Probst. realitytvrules.com
<http://www.tvrules.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=5854>
(accessed September 28, 2006)

11 And on *Survivor: The Amazon* Jenna and Heidi decided to wash their underwear and buffs in the pots designated for food (about 24 hours into their *Survivor* experience) instead of boiling water for drinking.

12 Despite the show's ironic parading of the natives and the landscapes as both sacred and important to the game, some contestants, like Scout (Vanuatu) or Tom (Palau) recognize, albeit in a new age kind of way, the beauty and importance of the spiritual traditions and peoples that inhabit the islands they are lucky enough, or rather privileged enough, to experience. It is luck, not privilege that is discussed. Thus, when the Red Berets come to show the *Survivors* how to live off the land in Thailand, or when a single indigenous man teaches similar lessons to the all-women tribe on *Survivor: Vanuatu*, or when the English-speaking fishermen of Palau teach the tribe to fish, this knowledge is needed for both immediate survival (or "survival") as well as to perpetuate the idea that the natives not only know more than Americans in this setting, but also know more about nature and control it in their own "mysterious" ways, ways that the colonizer cannot understand, but can take advantage of. More often, however, these invocations lead to shallow appropriations that become *Survivor*-specific rituals like "tribal council" and "immunity idols."

13 One notable exception here is the award-winning *The Amazing Race*, a reality TV game show that rivals *Survivor*'s longevity and trumps *Survivor*'s exploitation of peoples around the world. Contestants in this game must race to get back to the U.S. through a variety of challenges. Even when, like on *Survivor: Vanuatu*, some of the most authentic, though staged, rituals are included within the narrative of the show (as contestants were, for instance, included in a welcoming ritual and a festive meal and dance ceremony with real local fare and rituals), these attempts at authenticity are shadowed by the clearly tourist-oriented prizes like a helicopter ride for a picnic lunch on a volcano (where the contestants only ventured a few feet from the helicopter) and a horse-riding adventure to a prepared, and relatively luxurious, camp site. Both of the latter not only lack "authenticity," but are already pre-packaged in tourist-friendly forms like the contestants' trip to Jellyfish lake on *Survivor: Palau*. These are the "luxuries" for *Survivor* contestants and other first-world travelers/adventurers, including those viewers who will never undertake such expensive, ostentatious travels or adventures. Further, these are modern representations of the Other that first-world Americans can understand, accept, and fit within their fantasies.

14 In another example, "Asian" difference is marked, stereotypically, by food. For instance, when Shii-Ann, (one of the few Asian-Americans and first Chinese-American to be a *Survivor* cast member, and who returned as one of the only people of color on *Survivor: All-Stars*) ate a chicken neck in order not to waste food she was met with many disapproving words, sounds, and stares from her

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

tribemates. Perhaps she too closely resembled the people who eat the exotic fare of bugs and grubs that the contestants are often forced to eat on the “gross” food challenges, though she was certainly not the first or last Survivor contestant to be an outcast because of food preferences, nor was she the first or last whose difference made her a target. In fact, in the “American” context of the show, any difference is a reason for tribemates to be suspect of each other; they are, after all, only individuals competing for a prize. And in a twist to American individuality, the better one blends in, the better chance one has to go further in the game.

15 American products are used to provide “comfort foods,” even if these foods offer little or no nutritional value like the prize of Mountain Dew and Doritos, for instance, or Pringles and beer. This is a deliberate effect by advertisers; as Henry Jenkins argues, reality TV is “one of the primary testing grounds” for “new models of advertising that can grab the attention of commercial-skipping consumers,” especially since “early research suggests that actively engaged consumers recall advertising messages better than more casual viewers do.” In all of these ways, consumerism is intimately connected both with the show’s narrative, the game’s characteristics, and the show’s (and its related products’) consumption by viewers. “Digital Renaissance.” Resource Center: Convergence is Reality. Survivor Phoenix. 6 June 2003.

16 While I will discuss some such fissures in this paper, these gaps in gender are not my primary focus. However, it is worth noting that on many occasions the individual and collective performances of women in challenges has caused male contestants (and no doubt male viewers) to reassess their opinions of women as the “weaker” sex. Most notably, Stephanie of Survivor: Palau, was the only tribe member left after her team lost every immunity challenge (a first in Survivor’s history). Her last teammate, Bobby John, a fierce (but not so bright) competitor repeats several times what a great competitor Stephanie is and how she could beat any of the men. And she beat all the men on her tribe before getting voted off after the tribes merged.

17 This claim is contested starting in season 13, which I will describe shortly. Because season 13 divides contestants by “ethnicity” there are not only more Survivors of color, but there are also more Survivors who challenge narrow ideas about what it means to be an “American.” Case in point is the winner of season 13, Yul, and audience favorite Yau Man who will appear on season 16. Then again, as Asian Americans, both of these men could also be seen as “model minorities.”

18 It is “common sense” in America that one’s race is visible, even if it is visually indeterminant. In other words, race—a socially constructed idea with real implications—is defined in relationship to whiteness and is assumed to hold some essential character trait or traits.

19 In other words, “multicultural” often equates superficial inclusion of ethnic

Hentges—(In) Visible Fissures

minority/s traditions.

20 For instance, the winner of *Survivor: Palau* (season #10) Tom, very closely fits the archetypal American adventurer as well as the self-help model Vrooman describes. Further, Tom's eventual victory only reinforces the argument that women's "equality" is only a "self-congratulatory story of progress." Since Tom, a New York fire fighter, fits this mold, and since he is able to control and dominate the game in ways that no woman *Survivor* or *Survivor* of color has been able to do, his win only reinforces ideas of white supremacy and the white American as ideal. Of course, Todd's win in *China* shows that small, young (white) men can also dominate the game, albeit in very different ways.

21 The fourteenth season began with even more visual diversity than the thirteenth season; however, without the specific attention to race and ethnicity that framed the previous season, the "multicultural" American is posed in a different way—along a "first-world"/"third-world" or rich/poor dichotomy. After 19 *Survivors* built the most luxurious, equipped camp to date, the group was divided and the tribe that lost the immunity challenge went to a beach with only a pot and a machete while the winning team stayed at the shelter with plenty of food and water in addition to a couch, hammocks, and a toilet. While this split is representative of the growing class divide within the U.S. and around the world, it also harkens back to the colonizer/colonized dichotomy. But with fewer white *Survivor* contestants this season, is the "multicultural" American even more entrenched in the legacies of the past, or do the visible markers of racial and ethnic difference create a new American character? Regardless, *Survivor* contestants continue to disrupt their constructed American character. For instance, Dreamz, an African American cheerleading coach who speaks frequently about being homeless and how easy *Survivor* is compared to his real life, and Yau Man, who grew up in a "similar climate," both speak about being nearly "Native" to Fiji. Yau Man says he is "nearly native" while Dreamz says he's practically a "native Fujian, or Fijian." And this nativeness is contradicted by Lissi's claim that she is "Latin" so she knows that in Liliana's "little Mexican mind" she is "cooking something up." Perhaps it is contradictions such as those discussed here that reveal the true character of American "multiculturalism."

22 While *Survivor* continues to naturalize these notions; within its seemingly seamless narrative, fissures, such as those previously discussed, disrupt these notions. For instance, on *Survivor: Marquesas*, Matt worries that his ability to speak an "other" language might set him apart. Unlike his conversation partner, Daniel, who "looks Asian," Matt has white privilege that makes it easier for Matt to hide the things that make him different, like the fact that he was raised in Hong Kong. And Daniel notes that this fact makes Matt "more Asian" than him since Dan was born and raised in the states. As it turns out, Matt's desire to not make himself stand out is a smart move since Daniel is voted out relatively early while Matt makes it to the final two.

23 This fact is frequently noted in critiques of reality TV, including *Survivor*.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

24 Of the few women of color on the show, none have been sexualized in the ways that the white women are sexualized. With the exception of Alicia and the women from season thirteen, most women of color are in their 30s or 40s, and are often professional women, mothers, and/or wives.

25 These bodies might be “better” for patriarchy and capitalism, but they are not better for surviving. This is an irony not lost on the audience, or even on Heidi, since she referred to herself as “Skeletor” and had to be hospitalized following the show. However, since both Heidi and Jenna’s bodies were rewarded by capitalism and patriarchy when they posed for Playboy, this irony is, perhaps, undercut. This narrative was extended throughout the show and in the commercials and was repeated and debated often. This episode (number 3) was not only expertly edited around the issue of youth/“beauty” versus age/jealousy and men versus women, but it was also spliced to perfectly match the commercial breaks that interrupted the narrative. For instance, one segment focused on the all-male tribe fishing and bonding. The commercials that followed this segment were for products like Coors Light, Outback Steakhouse, and the movie Old School. All of the commercials featured men. Another segment focused on the skinny, pretty girls bathing partially naked (which was heavily promoted) and the commercials featured products (make-up, clothing, hair products) that matched this narrative. All of these commercials featured women.

26 Braun, citing bell hooks (1996), notes that while “this is not the only way that the black body is represented within present-day visual cultures, it is surprisingly prevalent” (202). We might argue that season 15’s James, the gravedigger, was used in similar ways. Since James is also credited with the biggest strategical blunder in Survivor history—being voted out while holding both immunity idols—the physical prowess of Black men over their mental prowess is reinforced.

27 There are, however, many ways in which contestants can be humiliated and ways in which they can participate in their own humiliation. For instance, when Susan freaks out and accuses Richard Hatch of sexual harassment on Survivor: Allstars, she is ridiculed in different ways. Many contestants comment on her overreaction and no one talks about whether she was sexually harassed, at least not on the camera footage the audience sees.

28 Conversely, (white) bodies are also used to disrupt homophobic, if not patriarchal, racialized, or capitalistic posing. For instance, season one’s Rudy became notorious for his comments about winner Richard Hatch, the “fat, naked, queer,” a title Richard used to describe himself (and several other cast members used as well). Many viewers may have had their opinions about gay people challenged by Rich’s character or by Rudy’s ability to work with Rich. But this gap did little to challenge, for instance, Richard Hatch’s position of privilege as a (large, white, corporate, often naked) man who can afford to claim his “queer” identity, while also vying for mainstream approval and acceptance. And this gap especially did not challenge the corporate strategies that Hatch used to

Hentges–(In) Visible Fissures

manipulate people, and to win. Because of his race and class Hatch could be “queer” and not be a threat, but others do not have the luxury to control the ways in which their sexuality is portrayed and understood.

29 In “On the Raggedy Edge of Risk” Bruce Braun discusses “risk culture” as “a site of cultural politics” (179) and as a realm that is almost exclusively white and male. He notes that white women are permitted in this space of risk as a “self-congratulatory story of progress” (203), while the “black adventurer” is not allowed. Here, I am considering *Survivor* as a site of cultural politics and complicating the racial lens we use to determine who is and is not allowed to claim the identity of an American adventurer.

30 TV.com. Forum-Survivor-you & exile island (spoilers) (accessed on September 28, 2006)

31 From her research, Annette Hill (2005, *Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television*) argues that there is much skepticism surrounding the potential to learn from reality TV shows. I also encountered such skepticism when presenting a version of this paper at the National Association for Ethnic Studies conference. However, learning from reality TV is not different from learning from any other form of television, culture, or art.

THE TASTES FROM PORTUGAL: FOOD AS REMEMBRANCE IN PORTUGUESE AMERICAN LITERATURE

**Reinaldo Silva
Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal**

Contemporary Portuguese American literature written by Thomas Braga (1943-), Frank Gaspar (1946-), and Katherine Vaz (1955-) share a profusion of topics - with ethnic food being, perhaps, the most representative one. What these writers have in common is that their roots can be traced to Portugal's Atlantic islands - the Azores - and not to continental Portugal. They are native Americans and write in English, though their characters and themes are Portuguese American. Some of them lived close to the former New England whaling and fishing centers of New Bedford and Nantucket, which Herman Melville has immortalized in *Moby-Dick* and in his short story, "The 'Gees," in *The Piazza Tales*. These seaports were renowned worldwide and eventually attracted Azorean harpooners. The Azorean background of Thomas Braga and Frank Gaspar helps us to understand why fish and seafood feature so extensively in their writings instead of dishes containing meat as is the case in the fiction of Katherine Vaz.

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

In these authors' works, writing about food is a means for ethnic identity and cultural preservation – especially in a multiethnic country as the United States of America where the official discourse in the past encouraged forgetfulness. And this meant forgetting one's ethnic background and anything associated with it so as to not be labelled an "unmeltable." In contemporary Portuguese American literature, food is a means to keep alive certain traditions in the ethnic enclaves of America, a land that, on occasion, has been hostile towards Otherness. In addition, food is an important anchor for ethnic identity and a means to connect with times which have completely disappeared. These authors' argument about food and cultural preservation, however, cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of how they relate to the homeland, religion, the garden, and music. By confronting their writings about food, one is reminded of a kaleidoscope where a central topic, food, encompasses a myriad of themes or angles of perception. The depth and richness of the former cannot fully be appreciated without a glance at the latter.

Caldo verde, the popular green cabbage soup that Jean Anderson considers "the national dish of Portugal,"¹ appears profusely in Frank X. Gaspar's first collection of poems, *The Holyoke* (1988), winner of the 1988 Morse Poetry Prize. Gaspar is the grandson of immigrants who came to Provincetown, Massachusetts, from the island of Pico, in the Azores. He is also the author of two additional award-winning collections of poetry. While *The Holyoke* comprises only eight poems touching upon Portuguese American issues, *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death* (1994), winner of the 1994 Anhinga Prize for Poetry, contains even fewer. Most of the poems in this collection range from the poet's days in the navy during Vietnam to his days as an undergraduate and graduate student in California and depict life in the Golden State, the drought, illegal Mexican immigrants being assisted by family members, the youth culture of the 1960s, the 1970s road culture, women, and sex. Practically all the poems in *A Field Guide to the Heavens* (1999), winner of the 1999 Brittingham Prize in Poetry, are about California, the poet's home. In the novel, *Leaving Pico* (1999), Gaspar probes deeper into his ancestral culture through Josie and his grandfather, John Joseph,

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

who, in the course of the story, tells Josie the tale of Carvalho, an adventurous explorer and competitor of Christopher Columbus. *Leaving Pico* gives a very detailed and engrossing portrayal of life in a Portuguese ethnic enclave in the United States. In his fourth collection of poems, *Night of a Thousand Blossoms*, published in 2004, references to ethnicity are scarce.²

"Tia Joanna" (Aunt Joanna), the third poem in Part One of *The Holyoke*, focuses on the religious zeal of a Portuguese immigrant woman and is also laden with references to food, especially Gaspar's favorite *caldo verde* soup, which, in this poem, he refers to as kale soup. This collection has three parts and it tells the "old story: a young man's passage from boyhood to maturity, in a small town by the sea. His people are Portuguese and Catholic."³ This work deals with a boy's growth and how nature and the community assist the process of maturation. Tia Joanna is depicted as a devout woman who spends much of her time in church either praying the rosary, going to confession, or experiencing a mystical union with God. Her patriarchal culture, however, demands that her presence in the kitchen and her role as a housewife never be neglected or sacrificed despite her religious fervor. Perhaps the poem's uniqueness lies in the manner in which it captures how Provincetown Portuguese women reconcile their spiritual lives with their role as housekeepers and wives of fishermen. While she is enjoying the ambiance of stillness, the murmur of voices in the confessional, and the flickering candles in her community church, Tia Joanna reflects on the bonds connecting her to the other women in church on that particular day. While they are all dressed in dark clothes, they are also very hard-working, devout, and unquestioning of their roles as housekeepers and cooks:

The soft kerchiefs
of the women, the dark cloth
of their long coats, the kale cooking
on the oilstoves in the redolent kitchens,
the checkered shirts of the husbands,
the fish they bring to the doorways... (7-8).

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

In this quote, we are invited to peek into these immigrants' kitchens and witness their simple ways and dress. Her wearing dark clothes may be her way of responding to the death of a loved one at sea or simply a cultural practice. Moreover, it stresses the gender roles in this culture, where the Portuguese fishermen readily give up their active, enterprising activity as soon as "the fish they bring to the doorways" is handed to their wives for them to gut and cook. Wishing she could prolong her prayers, her mystical experience with God, and eventually eating from God's holy body through "the host she will receive," Tia Joanna is fully aware that

tonight still there is mackerel to pickle
with vinegar and garlic in the stone crock,
her husband's silver hair to trim, the bread
to set rising in the big china bowl
on the stool tucked close to the chimney (7-8).

This quote foregrounds the kitchen as a woman's place in this New England immigrant fishing community and how women exercise their power there. The frugal meal consisting of kale soup and home baked bread, along with the mackerel she is preparing for other meals, stress this couple's relative poverty and simplicity. But as long as her husband has the strength to go out to sea and she grows her cabbages in her garden, there will always be something to put on their table. The knowledge that they will never starve in times of need is, certainly, re-assuring. This poem further stresses this woman's self-reliance, her independence, mothering, the power of the mother, as well as traditional gender roles which enhance the symbolism of the garden. In this sense, references to food and growing a vegetable garden are a common feature in most contemporary Portuguese American literature and this propensity to gardening still a customary practice in Portuguese communities in the United States.⁴

Kale soup is on the dinner table of Gaspar's *Leaving Pico* (1999), a novel about Azorean immigrant life in Provincetown and how this community reacts and resists to American ways. *Leaving Pico* captures quite well life in this ethnic enclave in the 1950s,

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

the antagonism between the Portuguese from the Azores islands, represented by the family of Josie, the story's narrator and grandson of John Joseph Carvalho, and the *Lisbons*, that is, those from the mainland Portugal, represented by Carmine, who is courting Josie's mother, Rosa. In a passage where the narrator, who is still a young boy of about twelve or thirteen, is complaining to his Uncle Paddy and great aunt Theophila about how the family avoids talking about the past and its secrets, we learn that they were all "eating kale soup at the kitchen table, a little past noon" (149).⁵ In this novel, ethnic eating is intimately connected with the vegetables grown in the immigrant's garden. During an episode when the neighbors try to extinguish the fire in Josie's house, Josie tells us that "Our little garden had been trampled, and kale and turnips lay crushed on the wet ground" (176). The garden provides sustenance to these poor immigrants, but for the older generations it is also a means to preserve one's ethnic identity and ancestral rural way of life. It also offers a retreat from the alienating conditions imposed by the factory, commercial fishing, the whaling or dairy industries, and intensive farming – activities in which the first generations of Portuguese immigrants excelled in the three traditional areas of settlement in the United States: New England, California, and Hawaii. The Portuguese communities in the New Jersey and New York areas are more recent, going back to the beginning of the twentieth-century, and are composed mostly of continental Portuguese, whereas the Azorean communities go back at least to the beginning of the nineteenth-century. A vegetable garden grown in the backyard characterizes Portuguese immigrant life in the United States, especially the first and second generations, who are adamant about erasing an ancestral rural way of life and yet do not wish to do away with the spiritual connection with the old country such a garden provides.

But why is food such an important element in Gaspar's work and why has it been an incentive for his writing? When I asked Gaspar about this, he generously shared the following with me:⁶ "Certainly," he writes, food "is the link with my heritage that is the strongest in that it is unaffected by time." The old people "pass on, the fishing industry is replaced by tourism, the wharves decay,

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

the old houses are bought up by yuppies and gentrified, the old Portuguese ways fade, but the food is always there. I can have it in my kitchen whenever I want.” Food also functions as an anchor connecting to a past that has completely disappeared. “Like the *petite Madeleine* in Proust’s *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*,” he notes, “the food conjures up the memories – the very PRESENCE – of that vanished world.”

For Gaspar, Portuguese food is a means through which he preserves a vanishing way of life in Provincetown, in a time when the Portuguese were the dominant ethnic group there. As for his favorite dishes, Gaspar says that “There is sweet bread on the top of my refrigerator right now. My son and I heat it for breakfast. We don’t always have it, but often.” Gaspar also stresses the vanishing social customs and the Americanization of ethnic foodways since he claims that his one “‘gourmet’ dinner that [he] cook[s] for guests is Portuguese Stuffed Sea Clams.” Moreover, he does “about two or three kale soups a year.” This may be due to his being away from the homeland or of seldom visiting the homeland of his ancestors. I think because taste and smell are such strong senses, we writers tend to use them to evoke a place or time. Whenever I’m back in Provincetown, I dine almost exclusively on Portuguese food as it’s found in all the little restaurants (not the new yuppie ones, of course). I like especially codfish, baked haddock, flippers... and *vinho d’alhos*. Mackerel or pork for those.

The irony is that some of these recipes as, for example, the Portuguese Stuffed Sea Clams, are not genuinely Portuguese; instead, they have been adapted – or Americanized – to meet the local Cape Cod taste and are also utilized because of the abundance of clams in this region. In most Portuguese recipes containing clams (*amêijoas*) such as, for example, *amêijoas à algarvia*, *amêijoas à bulhão pato*, *amêijoas de caldeirada*, and *amêijoas à guincho*, the clams are – depending on the recipe itself – seasoned only with olive oil, garlic, bay leaves, parsley, salt, pepper, coriander, lemon, onions, and tomatoes.⁷ Gaspar’s clam recipe suggests a range of additional ingredients which the author, unfortunately, does not specify. One reason the works of Gaspar are saturated with references to fish and seafood is that he is a Provincetown/New

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

England writer and, for that matter, tries to capture the livelihood of Portuguese fishermen he witnessed in this region. Presumably, fish was a regular presence on the family's table. In addition, he is also heir to a culture in which the sea has loomed so strongly since the Renaissance, especially with the Age of European Discoveries. It was simply impossible for him to ignore the presence – or proximity to – the Atlantic Ocean in his ethnic community as well as his ancestral seafaring cultural heritage in *Leaving Pico*.

Gian-Paolo Biasin's argument on the ways in which novelists often use meals in a narrative fits *Leaving Pico* quite well.⁸ In this novel, there are two clambakes that provide an intense look at the relationships of characters and food. Both episodes are a means for the characters to get together, socialize, and to connect with the ancestral culture through food, singing, and listening to *fado*.⁹ In the first episode, food allows for a clash between the values of the local Portuguese immigrants who retain an attitude of alienation and suspicion towards individuals from the mainstream and John Joseph, whose openness is gradually eroding these values. During this episode, they celebrate the annual ritual of the Blessing of the Fleet, on the first Sunday in June, whereas in the second they have gotten together to mourn the death of John Joseph, Josie's grandfather, who was shipwrecked. During the first clambake, in addition to the local Provincetown Portuguese immigrants, a gay couple, Roger and Lew, who have rented an upper room for the Summer season at Josie's house are present; the two women, Cynthia and Amalia, John Joseph is flirting with, are also present. John Joseph is, unlike most first-generation Portuguese immigrants, willing to interact with individuals from beyond his ethnic enclave and eager to know more about mainstream American ways. At a point when the clambake is already well under way and all the Portuguese guests had already arrived, we learn that "behind them came two women. They were not townspeople, but summer people, wearing long flowery dresses and big, wide-brimmed straw hats." The narrator goes on to note that a "ripple of distress passed through the *Pico* ladies sitting by the door" (28).

Although some of these fictional immigrants in Provincetown resist mainstream traditions and ways, the irony is that this episode

Silva—The Tastes from Portugal

highlights their appropriation of this “all American,” New England ritual so as to suit their needs. On the one hand, it is incorporated into this community’s Catholic calendar (the blessing of the fleet). On the other hand, it stresses the connection between food and religion in Portuguese American culture, an issue which we shall see ahead. Moreover, the clambake draws upon the way of life in an ethnic community. It allows for the community members to get together and, in the process, reminisce about the old country and revive some of its traditions:

John Joseph and I brought out the lobsters and clams and fish and bread and corn. Their smells spread a lushness in the air, and the women softened and talked and laughed as we all ate. Everyone celebrated my grandfather’s cooking, and cartons of ale were now stacked along the duckpen fence. Sometime after the clatter and slosh of eating had subsided, Jaime Costa, Juney’s younger brother, pulled his guitar out of its battered case, and in his ragged voice began singing *fados*, those sad, old-country songs of fate (29).

This quote is important for a number of reasons. On the one hand, it demonstrates how ethnic eating is a means to connect with the ancestral culture through music, but also an anchor for ethnic identity. On the other hand, it stresses the process of cultural hybridization this community is undergoing. *Fado* is not an Azorean song and it is not even popular there. It is sung in the U.S. Portuguese immigrant communities and it has been incorporated in Azorean-American culture. This quote stresses the way in which ethnic identity in the fictional world of Provincetown is kept alive through the preparation of food, growing vegetables in a garden (“corn”), and eating. These, in turn, anchor identity and allow it to hybridize in a new environment.

The second clambake is the climax of the novel since it draws all the people from this ethnic community together. It is held in chapter eighteen, the very last chapter in *Leaving Pico*. Everybody has gotten together to mourn John Joseph, who had perished at

sea. As in most Greek tragedies, the people in Provincetown are eager for a catharsis. In this novel, consuming food not only allows this community to pay their respects to the family of the deceased person, but also to uplift their state of mind and feelings. Sadness and loss are, therefore, another motive for consuming ethnic foods, especially when what is at stake is eulogizing and remembering a loved one.

In *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death*, Frank Gaspar also writes about a popular foodstuff available in most Portuguese communities in the United States, sweet bread (a yellow, sugared, egg-heavy cake), which can be eaten for dessert, or simply toasted with butter for breakfast or a late afternoon snack. In the poem "Acts," baking sweet bread is a community ritual that traditionally takes place the few days before Easter Sunday. In this poem, Gaspar shows how sweet bread and the ritual associated with baking it during Lent reinforces the bond between specific foodstuffs and religion in Portuguese and Portuguese American culture. Moreover, eggs are traditionally associated with Easter. This is due to their abundance on farms during this time of the year, Spring, and this might account for Portuguese women back home or in the American diaspora using them profusely during the Easter season. More than during any other time of the year, sweet bread is baked during this period not only for religious but cultural reasons. Currently, in Portuguese villages, women work very hard to have their Easter table with plenty of sweets, sweet bread, and other cakes so as to receive their guests and neighbors during the yearly Easter ritual of kissing the cross carried by the local priest and his acolytes, who go from house to house announcing the resurrection of Christ. After the brief prayer, everyone gathers around the table to eat and drink. This activity usually lasts for one or two afternoons (Easter Sunday and Monday) and the whole community takes the time to engage in this ritual by going from one house to the other, celebrating their happiness and religious beliefs, while eating and drinking together. In a new environment, the United States, this ancestral ritual is difficult to put into practice, but this poem also stresses this community's strong ties, given that the narrator's mother and a few other women were baking sweet

Silva—The Tastes from Portugal

bread. Baking cakes together is also a means to celebrate friendship and unity in this community:

As if there were no bitterness
in their lives, as if no dark ever
slid outward from the sills of
those kiltered windows, the house
would suddenly fill with women
and the rooms would float in heady
yeasts while my mother, powdered
to the wrists in flour, would pound
the dough in the great bowl, yellow,
sugared, egg-heavy, warm in the gossip
and coal-smoke of a winter morning.¹⁰

While they waited a few hours for the dough to swell by the fireside, the women would resume their chores and return at a later time so as to start baking the sweet bread:

And the gravid bowl set by the chimney
filled each corner with lingering
spirits, the sweet bread swelling,
buttock, breast, belly, plump tub
of the world where the women even then
were softly disappearing into their
envies and wishes... (19).

The overall ambiance of harmony and friendliness in this community is replete, especially when we learn that the men

also slipped toward shadows as they waited
for the hot slabs tendered from the oven,
greased with butter, to dredge
in milked coffee after a freezing day
at the wharves... (19).

In a poem laden with religious language, it is worth pondering the metaphorical connection Gaspar establishes between food,

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

religion, and sexuality (“gravid”; “swelling”; “buttock”; “breast”; and “belly”). In “Acts,” these elements provide additional layers of ethnic identity. The process the dough undergoes before the sweet bread is baked is rendered in terms of an analogy. It is metaphorically compared to the sexual act, where the dough is “pound[ed]” and “the gravid bowl” and its “swelling” contents “set by the chimney.” These references are reminiscent of a pregnant woman during complete bed rest. As far as the religious imagery is concerned, it is undoubtedly associated with Christ’s Last Supper. The old woman’s blessing of the sweet bread before it is baked, its distribution after it is taken out of the oven, and the communal ritual of the men eating together reminds us of holy Eucharist:

and the oldest
among them all, maple-skinned, gaunt
under her rough apron, brushing
the heel of her hand in the Sign
of the Cross over still-rising loaves,
a devotion she would never again
make over loaves like these,
never again in exactly this way,
the earth, in the rife bounty
it heaps upon the favored, letting
go of all of this forever: If such
sweet bread were ever blessed or holy,
let them take it now, quickly – and eat (19).

Not only does this poem center on a popular Portuguese delicacy, it also highlights the Catholic fervor of the people living in this Portuguese American community.

In the writings under review, food plays an important role in preserving ethnic identity. Not only is this achieved through the connection between food and the homeland, food and music, the garden and the homeland, it is also through food and religion. In addition to Gaspar’s poem “Acts,” food and religion are also connected in Thomas J. Braga’s two poems, “Codfish Cakes” and “Bacalhau,” from *Portingales* (1981). His place in the Portuguese

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

American tradition of life writing rests on this compelling collection of poems and on *Borderlands* (1994). Braga is the grandson of Portuguese immigrants from the island of São Miguel in the Azores. He was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, and was a Professor of French language and literature. Braga has also published *Chants Fugitifs* (1981), *Coffee in the Woodwinds* (1990), *Crickers' Feet* (1992), *Litotes* (1997), *Motley Coats* (2001), *Inchoate: Early Poems* (2003), and *Amory: Six Dialogues and Six Poems* (2006). Braga was one of the first Portuguese American voices to write about the complexities of being born a hyphenated American and writing in the English language.¹¹

While Gaspar's "Acts" stressed the use of eggs to bake a popular Easter cake, sweet bread, Braga's "Codfish Cakes" and "Bacalhau" highlight the fish diet most Portuguese observe during Lent. By choosing to write about these issues, both poets believe that food and Catholicism are intimately related and a means to preserve ethnic identity in a country where ethnic minorities have been encouraged to assimilate and discard their distinctive ethnic traits. These poems also highlight how specific Portuguese Catholicism and other beliefs, social traditions, and ethnic foods are preserved within the Portuguese enclaves of America. In addition, "Codfish Cakes" points to the Catholic observance of a fish diet on Fridays during Lent. Since the symbolism of Lent centers on moderation, abstinence, and penance, eating meat on Fridays would be perceived as a disrespectful act because it is reminiscent of Christ's shedding of blood on the Cross:

No meat today, don't ask!
No red sacrifice, instead the sea
will confess our sins in white
make us pure in a frying pan.¹²

In the following strophe, Braga enumerates the ingredients which are used to make these codfish cakes:

It's Fri-day, herbs, black aprons
Dress friends – mackerel, flounder, cod

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Parsley, onions, green sauce anointed
Fill our souls with sanctity marine (29).

The final strophes make a parallel between the oil in which they are fried and the role of olive oil in such pivotal Catholic moments as, for example, baptism and extreme unction:

Codfish cakes sizzle in holy oils
greasy hosts dished out to each
in kitchens of briny Ports
shawls chanting waves of the catch.

Salty patties, water, poesy, place
make the sea our sod, sanctuary
as we sail through centuries, grace,
eating codfish cakes, kale, statuary (29).

This poem indirectly touches upon quintessential aspects of life in a Portuguese fishing community, which further characterize this culture. Traditionally, the widows put on “black aprons” or “shawls” so as to mourn their shipwrecked husbands. Others simply wear dark clothes all the time since there is no joy when a loved one is away for days or months at a time. Fishermen, their wives believe, only come back to life when coming ashore. The mood in this poem is marked by a certain feeling of fate (“fado”) and nostalgia (“saudade”), aspects which, some believe, characterize the Portuguese temper. Often, codfish cakes are made at the expense of lives lost at sea, which enhances the notion of “fado” in Portuguese culture. The perils involved in catching codfish in Newfoundland for about half a year, the storms and the imminent shipwrecks, and the wives or mothers who long for their husbands or sons are aspects which this poem touches upon – even if indirectly. With the sea possessing such a symbolical value in Portuguese culture (epitomized by Portugal’s role in the Age of European Discoveries and its fishing subculture and traditions), the sea has, indeed, shaped the Portuguese outlook on life: that of a people subject to its whims. The phrase “make the sea our sod”

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

highlights the sea as an important locale for several Portuguese, but it also suggests Braga's play on the sea as their god as well. From a Christian perspective, fishing is a very important activity since Christ associated with fishermen. In Matthew 4: 18-22, Christ invited Peter, Andrew, James, and John to join Him and they, in turn, became his disciples. In this passage as in the other gospels, Christ refers to Himself as a fisherman who was "fishing" for followers. For a devout Catholic people such as the Portuguese, fishing was seen as a sacred activity blessed by God. In addition, the poem's religious diction in such phrases as "red sacrifice," "confess our sins in white," "pure," "holy oils," and "sanctuary" further attest to these women's Catholic beliefs and how they cling to God since He is the only One capable of bringing their loved ones ashore. In times of abstinence and penance, codfish, the *fiel amigo*, or loyal friend, comes in handy since it can be cooked in a number of different ways, thus allowing for diversity during those long weeks of Lent.

In both poems, "Codfish Cakes" and "Bacalhau," fishing and cooking codfish are activities which foreground quintessential aspects in Portuguese American ethnic identity. "Bacalhau" is a good example of the Portuguese fondness for codfish, but also a hymn to all the fishermen who sail to Newfoundland to capture it:

In search of hallowed cod,
all salted, all preserved,
in high rubber boots shod,
'Guees sail, for brine reserved (45).

Compared to the previous poem, the ingredients utilized in the recipe(s) alluded to in the last three strophes are slightly different, which supports the idea that this *fiel amigo* is an important foodstuff in Portuguese gastronomy:

Hauled into port, the fish,
loyal friends sacrificed,
dressed in oils, eggs, the dish
in garlic, onions diced

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

with olives, potatoes,
lemon and paprika,
for some with tomatoes,
Bacalhau America

in ethnic savours best.
With memories repast,
dark seaweed spirits rest
by sirens lured, barques past (45).

There are, at least, two codfish recipes which this poem suggests, namely *Bacalhau à Brás* and *Bacalhau à Gomes de Sá*, which reinforces the notion of variety in Portuguese cuisine and the numerous ways in which codfish can be cooked. Although codfish cakes are a Portuguese delicacy, their taste might not be as pleasant especially when recalling those unfortunate sailors whose “spirits” and bodies were trapped in the “dark seaweed.” By capitalizing “Bacalhau [codfish] America,” Braga stresses its importance in Portuguese gastronomy and how these traditions are kept alive in the Portuguese ethnic enclaves of America, a land that has often been hostile towards Otherness. On occasion, this hostility has been expressed a propos the eating habits of most minorities.¹³

Braga attaches a sense of sacredness to the lives of these fishermen and their catch since they are constantly putting their health and lives at risk and, in the end, are exploited by the owners of the boats. The poem is also replete with religious overtones as in the phrase “hallowed cod.” Braga stresses the Catholic fervor of the Portuguese through the Eucharistic connotations associated with eating it and the spirit of the Grail quest embedded in the poem (in such phrases as “in search of hallowed cod”). He also wishes to stress the perilous situations these men often encounter at sea. Whether they will or will not encounter what they are looking for lies in the hands of God. While Christ sacrificed His life to redeem sinners, these fishermen often sacrifice their lives to allow for this foodstuff to appear on the tables of most Portuguese or Portuguese Americans. Braga describes the importance of food in a letter:

My food poems are about ingesting cultural values. After ethnics have forgotten the language of their ancestors, they still remember the “taste” of the “familial” foods which helps them to identify themselves as distinct from Anglos and other hyphenated Americans. Much the way the *Madeleine* worked for Marcel Proust to conjure up his personal past (*À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*), so too my Portuguese food poems are a mnemonic aid, a link to my childhood through gustatory sensations.¹⁴

Braga’s point on the role of ethnic food as a means to preserve identity and to establish a bridge with one’s ancestral culture is similar to the one made by Gaspar. He then goes on to note that: The repetition of such words as “vinho,” “caldinho,” “bacalhau,” “massa,” “malassadas,” etc. acquires a liturgical quality in my poetry suggesting a religious rite of *saudade*.

In this statement, Braga further establishes the parallel between food and religion in Portuguese culture and then goes on to note how wine on his grandmother’s dinner table transported him to his youth, life in his ethnic community, and how it served as a liaison with mainstream life. For example, “vinho” is associated with *Vovó’s* dinner table. It has a certain color, taste, aroma, an ambiance of sounds and images, a *sarau*. Wine, on the other hand, is what we purchased at the package store. It was always associated (at least in my mind) with what was outside the house, or what was advertised on TV. It’s what we drank at restaurants, cocktail parties, with “gente da nação” (my grandmother’s term for American born Anglos).

The two most often cited points concerning food and ethnicity in America – memory and retaining ethnic identity (see Magliocco) – are the ones Braga has mentioned in this quote.¹⁵ While food may be a powerful means to maintain ethnic identity, it is also how one connects with the past, especially in a situation where the ethnic subject can no longer verbalize any of the words pertaining to the ancestral language. Although the relationship between the

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Portuguese and the sea dates back a few centuries, this does not mean that one can only find fish dishes on a Portuguese or Portuguese American table. Gaspar and Braga showed a preference for fish and seafood dishes in their writings, but Katherine Vaz's *Saudade* (1994) begins with a barbecue, so as to stress the importance of meat in a Portuguese diet as well. *Saudade* is about a self-reliant deaf-mute young woman, Clara, who through much effort tries to regain the piece of land in Lodi, California, that her uncle Victor had bequeathed to her mother, Conceição Cruz. In the Azores, Father Teo Eiras had managed to convince her mother to sign the deed of the land over to the Catholic church. Afterward, both Clara, an orphan in her teens, and the priest, Father Teo Eiras, emigrate to California, and when she becomes a young woman, she seduces him and gets pregnant but, to her dismay, never becomes the legal owner of the land, which remains in the hands of the church.

Within Clara's saga to retrieve her land, there are also allusions to Portuguese culture and traditions. *Saudade* is also a story about how the values, culture, and literature of a country from the Old World have come into contact with those of the New World. Vaz attempted to bridge the literary traditions of both Portuguese and American literature; more specifically, the two novels concern a child that has been fathered by a priest. The American classic dealing with this matter is Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850); the Portuguese counterpart is Eça de Queiroz's *O Crime do Padre Amaro* (1875; *Father Amaro's Sin*). Vaz's second novel, *Mariana*, was published in 1997. This interest in a clergyman fathering a child is also present in the story "Original Sin" in *Fado Other Stories*, which won the 1997 Drue Heinz Literature Prize and is composed of twelve pieces, three of which are representative of Portuguese American themes: "Fado"; "My Hunt for King Sebastião"; and "The Remains of Princess Kaiulani's Garden."¹⁶ The barbecue episode takes place just before José Francisco, Clara's father (at this point, Clara had not yet been conceived), and his wife, Conceição Cruz, are hosting a farewell party for him. He was about to leave for his first fishing voyage to Portugal's mainland, in the fishing village of Nazaré. This episode stresses the importance of meat in a Portuguese diet as opposed to fish in the other texts.

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

One of the characters, Henrique Cerqueira, José Francisco's "closest friend," has "milked cows for such interminable hours hoping to save money for America that his hands were swollen into bleached sacs, each with five teats."¹⁷ This character represents the thousands of Portuguese men who emigrated to California to work in its dairy industry. He had, we learn, brought green, white, and red wines and crabs, lobsters, and coins stuck in apples for good luck. He came bearing *abrotea* fish for grilling, black *morcela* sausages, salted tomatoes, pork with clams and red peppers, and eels killed with tobacco in the water to remove their slime. Instantly he was swept into an argument with Maria Josefa about the right way to cook pork (5).

The choice of foods for this barbecue substantiates Anderson's point about variety and the "innovative teaming"¹⁸ of fish, meat, seafood, and vegetables in Portuguese cuisine. Although Portugal is a relatively small country (both the mainland and the islands composing the archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores), its richness lies in the variety of regional foods and dishes. This diversity is well represented in the Portuguese American communities as well. Since Vaz is a Californian writer of Portuguese/ Irish-American descent and grew up in a cattle-breeding environment, it would make sense that she would include meat in her fictional meals. Reading Vaz's fiction adds another dimension to the representation of food in the writings from her Portuguese American cultural background. Should one only look, instead, for the representation of food in Braga's and Gaspar's writings, this would certainly be too reductive since they focus mostly on fish, kale soup, and sweet bread. In addition to meat products, Vaz also writes about the importance of sweets and desserts in Portuguese gastronomy. Reading all three authors leaves us with a sense of completeness and exposes us to the variety in Portuguese cuisine that we, in fact, encounter in all sorts of Portuguese cook books.¹⁹ And even though these middle-class American writers of Portuguese descent focus on foods and cuisines eaten by and prepared by mostly working class people – their immigrant ancestors – these diets and selections of food are exactly the same or are popular among middle-class or professional Portuguese Americans or native Portuguese in Europe,

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

regardless of their social background. Most of these foodstuffs are made exactly the same way whether they are to be served in a Portuguese restaurant in, for example, the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey (or any other big Portuguese community in the United States) or in Portugal.

Saudade concerns the author's home state, California, even if it attempts to highlight the clash in values between the Old and New worlds. It also illustrates the Portuguese ways of life in rural California and their involvement in the local dairy industry. That is why meat, instead of a fish diet, features so strongly in this novel. But in *Saudade* and *Mariana* (1997), Vaz exhibits a stronger preference for the sweets and desserts made in Portuguese convents by nuns, a tradition dating all the way back to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries. Without a doubt, this connection between food and the homeland, that is, between sweets and nuns is not unique to Portugal, but exists throughout the Catholic Mediterranean. Vaz, however, focuses on the Portuguese convent sweets since these are, most likely, the ones she is most familiar with. In *Saudade*, Clara, who has grown up in California and knows very little about her country of birth, Portugal, learns about the legend associated with these sweets:

“Long ago, in the convents of Portugal, the nuns starched their wimples and habits with egg whites. Because wastefulness is a sin, they needed to dream up uses for the leftovers. That is how they came to invent the yolk-heavy desserts that are made to this day” (111).

As a means to connect with the ancestral food and tastes, in *Saudade*, we find Dr. Helio Soares helping Clara beat the egg into castles with sugar and salt and shaped the meringues on brown paper, and while the *suspiros* baked, they made dreams, boiling the milk and mixing in flour, sugar, and eggs. Her hair fell toward the spitting oil in a frying pan (202). This passage refers to at least two desserts: *suspiros* (sighs) and *sonhos* (dreams).

In the fictional world of Katherine Vaz's *Mariana*, convent

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

sweets are very important. Vaz has picked up on a seventeenth-century love story rendered to us in Portuguese literature through a nun, Soror Mariana de Alcoforado, titled *Cartas Portuguesas*. In *Mariana*, Vaz does not write a radically different story from the original one in *Cartas Portuguesas*. On the one hand, Vaz translated the love letters this Portuguese nun had written to the French officer, Noel Bouton, she had fallen in love with. On the other hand, she re-creates the ambiance in Southern Portugal, Beja, in the seventeenth-century as the Portuguese struggle, through the aid of the French, to break free from Spanish rule, which began in 1580 and ended in 1640. As for the desserts, we learn that various cooks were baking sweets and pastries in the convent's kitchen. As soon as they learn about this activity, Sister Mariana and Brites de Freire immediately slipped down to the kitchen, where the cooks were busy. They worked through the night, so that the delicacies they would sell to townspeople appeared as if by magic at sunrise. Egg whites were used to starch everyone's habits and wimples, which left so many yolks that they had to invent yolk-rich desserts to avoid the sin of wastefulness. In the cook's struggle to dream up new things from the same old substance, they had to rely on humour, giving their creations names such as Nuns' Bellies, Angels' Breasts, Abbots' Ears. Mariana and Brites de Freire were enthralled by this frieze from time immemorial, with women awake before daylight, working, inventing, amusing themselves.²⁰

By focusing on convent sweets traditionally made by Portuguese nuns, Vaz tries to connect with her ancestral culture and provide an anchor for ethnic identity. In *Mariana*, not only does she open the door to Portuguese culture for an American audience interested in learning about it, she also whets their appetite for Portuguese food. The author has conveyed in an e-mail that her "grandfather from the Azores was a fine baker, and anything to do with Portuguese sweets reminds [her] quite directly of him."²¹ As a tribute to her grandfather, these sweets are also a means for her to tap into her senses for artistic purposes. As far as this issue is concerned, she has written that:

I very much like the names of desserts in Portuguese –

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Sonhos, Suspiros, and so on, but also the amusing ones, *Breasts of Angels, Nuns' Tummies*, etc. The very language of these seems inviting for a writer to use – as if an ordinary dessert suddenly becomes not only whimsical but sensuous and entertaining and light – hearted. (E-mail 21 March 2001)

She goes on to note that writing about food is a theme that appeals to her even if her creative writing students omit references to the senses in their own writing. She thinks this is ironic since our senses are exploited to the fullest when we, for example, daily turn our TV sets on. My years of teaching also showed me that students now very often neglect to include in their stories mention of these things-of-the-senses that are part of our lives alone or with others; food can be seen as a communion.²²

For Vaz it is strange that contemporary students shaped by the media resist expressing how something in particular appeals to their senses. Food is perhaps the best means to do so publicly even if we try to keep our feelings within our own private realm.

In an interview for the Newark, New Jersey Portuguese American Newspaper, *Luso-Americano*, Vaz told her interviewer:

My mother, despite her Irish background, often cooked several Portuguese dishes. When I was still a child, my parents wrote a book containing Portuguese recipes. They were so fond of preserving everything that was Portuguese.²³

In addition to “perpetuating one’s cultural background and ethnicity,” food, writes Pereira, is a means for “keeping the family together, a means to share something meaningful, and a part of one’s life.”

Convent sweets, Maria Isabel de Vasconcelos Cabral reminds us, are also a Portuguese cultural legacy in the sense that some of the ingredients utilized to make them are intimately related to – and evocative of – the spices and foodstuffs the Portuguese sailors brought back with them from India during the Age of European

Silva—The Tastes from Portugal

Discoveries.²⁴ Without Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India in 1498, it is unlikely that spices would have become so readily available to most European consumers. And convent sweets – I would further add – perhaps unknown to us, as well. Through her writing, Vaz – along with Gaspar and Braga – are irreplaceable ambassadors of Portugal on American soil because they share with Americans some of the best cultural nuggets (food; *fado*-singing; religious fervor; folklore; and literary allusions) the Portuguese have to offer to the world at large.

While food may play a similar role among the various ethnic backgrounds composing the American mosaic, in the particular case of the Portuguese American experience, it has its own specificities. Food is an important anchor for ethnic identity and a means to connect with times which have completely disappeared. While the profusion of seafood evokes the Portuguese ancestral seafaring cultural heritage, its consumption may also be a strong reason to bring people together to mourn some fisherman lost at sea or simply a motive to reminisce about the old country and revive some of its traditions. Most importantly, food stresses the bond between specific foodstuffs (sweet bread and codfish cakes) and religion in Portuguese culture and how these are intimately related.

As the Portuguese become more and more assimilated into the mainstream, the very last Portuguese elements which resist this process are one's last name and ethnic food. With Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz, for a while, Portuguese Americans will feel reassured that their traditions, culture, food, and way of life in America will survive. But only time will tell if the foodstuffs discussed in this essay will stand the test of time, that is, if within a few decades from now Americans will still be able to identify them as being of Portuguese origin. Or, instead, will these be marketed as "American" products just as sweet bread and the Portuguese sausage, *linguiça*, are nowadays in many supermarkets and delicatessens across the nation? Regardless of what will eventually happen, and as long as we keep on toasting one another with a glass of Port wine, these moments of happiness evoke another important Portuguese contribution to the entire

world.

Works Cited

Abrahams, Roger. "Equal Opportunity Eating: A Structural Excursus on Things of the Mouth." *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*. Eds. Linda Keller Brown and Kay Russell. Knoxville: The U of Tennessee P, 1984. 19-36.

Anderson, Jean. *The Food of Portugal*. New York: William Morrow, 1986.

Biasin, Gian-Paolo. *The Flavors of Modernity: Food and the Novel*. Trans. Gian-Paolo Biasin. Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1993.

Braga, Thomas J. *Portingales*. Providence RI: Gávea-Brown, 1981.
---. Letter to the author. 27 July 2001.

Cabral, Maria Isabel de Vasconcelos. *O Livro de Receitas da Última Freira de Odivelas*. Lisboa: Editorial Verbo, 1999.

Gabaccia, Donna R. *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1998.

Gaspar, Frank X. *The Holyoke*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1988.

---. *Leaving Pico*. Hanover NH: UP of New England, 1999.

---. *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death*. Tallahassee FL: Anhinga P, 1995.

---. *Night of a Thousand Blossoms*. Farmington ME: Alice James Books, 2004

---. E-mail to the author. 2 October 2001.

Magliocco, Sabina. "Playing with Food: The Negotiation of Identity

Silva—The Tastes from Portugal

in the Ethnic Display Event by Italian Americans in Clinton, Indiana." *Studies in Italian American Folklore*. Ed. Luisa Del Giudice. Logan UT: Utah State UP, 1993. 107-26.

Modesto, Maria de Lourdes. *Cozinha Tradicional Portuguesa*. Lisboa: Editorial Verbo, 1993.

Oliver, Mary in Frank Gaspar. *The Holyoke*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1988.

Pap, Leo. *The Portuguese-Americans*. Boston: Twayne, 1981.

Pereira, Maria do Carmo. "A Autora de *Fado* and Other Stories, *Saudade* e *Mariana*: 'Quando Tinha Doze Anos Já Sabia Que Queria Ser Escritora!'" *Luso-Americano* 16 March 2001: 6-7.

Santiago, Luís. *Cozinha Regional da Beira Litoral*. Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América, n.d.

Silva, Reinaldo Francisco. "Frank Xavier Gaspar." *The Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*. Ed.

Emmanuel S. Nelson. 5 vols. Westport CT: Greenwood, 2005. [Vol. 2: pp. 798-801].

---. "The Ethnic Garden in Portuguese-American Writing." *The Journal of American Culture* 28.2 (2005): 191-200.

---. "Katherine Vaz." *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*. Ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson. 5 vols. Westport CT: Greenwood, 2005. [Vol. 5: pp. 2208-10].

---. "Portuguese American Literature and Anticlericalism: Katherine Vaz's Reshaping of the Tradition." *Gávea- Brown: A Bilingual Journal of Portuguese-American Letters and Studies* XXII-XXII (2001-2): 46-63.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

---. "Thomas J. Braga." *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*. Ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson. 5 vols. Westport CT: Greenwood, 2005. [Vol. 1: pp. 311-12].

Valente, Maria Odette Cortes Valente, *Cozinha Regional Portuguesa*. Coimbra: Almedina, 1986.

Vaz, Katherine. *Fado & Other Stories*. Pittsburgh PA: U of Pittsburgh P, 1997.

---. *Mariana*. London: Flamingo, 1997.

---. *Saudade*. New York: St. Martin's, 1994.

---. E-mail to the author. 21 March 2001.

---. E-mail to the author. 2 November 2001.

Notes

¹ Jean Anderson, *The Food of Portugal* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 10.

² See Reinaldo Francisco Silva, "Frank Xavier Gaspar," *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*. Ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson. 5 vols. Westport CT: Greenwood, 2005. [Vol. 2: pp. 798-801].

³ See Mary Oliver's introduction in Frank X. Gaspar, *The Holyoke* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1988), p. xi. Further references to poems in *The Holyoke* are from this edition.

⁴ See Reinaldo Francisco Silva, "The Ethnic Garden in Portuguese-American Writing," *The Journal of American Culture* 28.2 (2005): 191-200.

⁵ Frank X. Gaspar, *Leaving Pico* (Hanover NH: UP of New England, 1999).

⁶ E-mail to the author. 2 October 2001.

⁷ See Maria Odette Cortes Valente, *Cozinha Regional Portuguesa* (Coimbra: Almedina, 1986), pp. 153-54.

⁸ Gian-Paolo Biasin, *The Flavors of Modernity: Food and the Novel*, trans. Gian-Paolo Biasin (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1993), p. 13.

Silva–The Tastes from Portugal

⁹ In the story “Fado,” in *Fado & Other Stories* (Pittsburgh PA: U of Pittsburgh P, 1997), pp. 97-8, Katherine Vaz defines *fado* in the following manner: “The *fados* wailing from our record players remind us that without love we will die, that the oceans are salty because the Portuguese have shed so many tears on their beaches for those they will never hold again.”

¹⁰ Frank X. Gaspar, *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death* (Tallahassee FL: Anhinga P, 1995), p. 19.

¹¹ See Reinaldo Francisco Silva, “Thomas J. Braga” in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*, ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson. 5 vols. Westport CT: Greenwood, 2005. [Vol. 1: pp. 311-12].

¹² This poem and the subsequent ones by Thomas J. Braga are included in *Portingales* (Providence RI: Gávea-Brown, 1981), p.29.

¹³ Donna R. Gabaccia has noted in *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1998), especially on pages 203; 8; and 9 that in America, food and ethnic stereotyping have been used to demean Otherness: “When we want to celebrate, or elevate, our own group, we usually praise its superior cuisine. And when we want to demean one another, often we turn to eating habits; in the United States we have labelled Germans as ‘krauts,’ Italians as ‘spaghetti-benders,’ Frenchmen as ‘frogs,’ and British as ‘limeys.’” On this issue, see also Roger Abrahams’ article, “Equal Opportunity Eating: A Structural Excursus on Things of the Mouth,” in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*, eds. Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell (Knoxville: The U of Tennessee P, 1984): 19-36. Rogers has noted that in America, Chicanos/as have been associated – and often denigrated – for their tamales, while the Frenchmen have been stereotyped as eaters of frog legs, and Southern blacks as possum-eaters. The Portuguese, too, have not been exempt from such a treatment as well. My childhood recollections of Newark, New Jersey of the Portuguese as sardine and codfish eaters along with the “pork chop” and “pork and cheese” ethnic slurs are still imprinted on my mind. Fortunately, these days belong to the past.

¹⁴ Thomas J. Braga. Letter to the author. 27 July 2001.

¹⁵ See Sabina Magliocco’s article, “Playing with Food: The Negotiation of Identity in the Ethnic Display Event by Italian Americans in Clinton, Indiana” in *Studies in Italian American Folklore*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice (Logan UT: Utah State UP, 1993): 107-8. See also Leo Pap, *The Portuguese-Americans* (Boston: Twayne, 1981), pp. 213-14.

¹⁶ For more background information on *Saudade*, see Reinaldo Francisco Silva, “Portuguese American Literature and Anticlericalism: Katherine Vaz’s Reshaping of the Tradition,” *Gávea-Brown: A Bilingual Journal of Portuguese-American Letters and Studies* XXII-XXIII (2001-2): 46-63. See also Reinaldo Francisco Silva,

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

"Katherine Vaz," in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*. Ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson. 5 vols. Westport CT: Greenwood, 2005 [Vol. 5: pp. 2208-10].

¹⁷ This quote and the subsequent one can be found in Katherine Vaz's novel, *Saudade* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994), p. 4.

¹⁸ See Anderson, p.12.

¹⁹ See, for example, Maria de Lourdes Modesto's, *Cozinha Tradicional Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Editorial Verbo, 1993) or even Luís Santiago's *Cozinha Regional da Beira Litoral* (Mem Martins: Edições Europa-América, n.d.).

²⁰ See Katherine Vaz's *Mariana* (London: Flamingo, 1997), p. 52. In my view, Vaz is not correct. "Angels' Breasts" must be her translation of "papos de anjo." The "papos" of children – as well as angels – are their bellies. No iconography in Portuguese ever represented angels with breasts. In the case of "Nuns' Bellies" ("barrigas de freira"), the word is "barriga" because nuns are adults. "Papo" is for babies or children. One can also use "papo" with adults, but most often in a metaphorical sense. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer(s) of this manuscript for calling my attention to this detail and for helping me hone my overall argument in this essay.

²¹ Katherine Vaz. E-mail to the author. 2 November 2001.

²² Katherine Vaz. E-mail to the author. 21 March 2001.

²³ See Maria do Carmo Pereira, "A Autora de *Fado and Other Stories, Saudade e Mariana: 'Quando Tinha Doze Anos Já Sabia Que Queria Ser Escritora', Luso-Americano* 16 March 2001: 6-7; my translation; the original can be found on page 7 as well as the subsequent quote, which I have also translated.

²⁴ See Maria Isabel de Vasconcelos Cabral's book, *O Livro de Receitas da Última Freira de Odivelas* (Lisboa: Editorial Verbo, 1999), p. 45.

TO ARRANGE OR NOT: MARRIAGE TRENDS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

**Farha Ternikar
Le Moyne College**

Introduction¹

The idea of the arranged marriage has always seemed “exotic” yet has fascinated the American public. Recent media coverage of arranged marriages is evident in popular periodicals such as the *New York Times Online* (August 17, 2000) and *Newsweek* (March 15, 1999). Foner highlights that the arranged marriage is an example of “the continued impact of premigration cultural beliefs and social practices” that South Asian immigrants have transported to the United States (Foner 1997, 964). She offers an interpretive synthesis by showing that “[n]ew immigrant family patterns are shaped by cultural meanings and social practices that immigrants bring with them from their home countries as well as by social, economic, and cultural forces in the United States” (Foner 2005, 157).

1 Acknowledgements: This paper could not have been completed without the generous support and comments of the following: Prema Kurien, Fred Kniss, Paul Numrich, Frank Ridzi, Travis Vande Berg, Judith Wittner, and Rhys Williams.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

This article explores the marriage options that South Asian immigrants have and how religion influences these options. The choice in the South Asian American community, once between the arranged marriage and the “love marriage,” now includes additional options as new immigrants negotiate new ways of finding marriage partners. These methods vary depending on religious tradition, family influence and ethnic community ties. These new methods are examples of ways that second-generation immigrants try to preserve some traditions from their parents’ generation while creating new traditions. My research finds that courtship and marriage norms in the South Asian immigrant community are often reinforced by traditional religious ideology, but they vary by religious tradition. For example, a conservative Swaminarayan Hindu temple may arrange marriages through family networks to ensure religious and racial endogamy, while a liberal Indian Catholic church may allow dating in its community as an appropriate method of meeting potential marriage partners, or a conservative mosque may advocate arranged or semi-arranged marriages in hopes of maintaining modesty and chastity norms².

This study is significant because there is a dearth of research on religion and South Asian immigrant families. Though significant studies have made great contributions to the study of South Asian immigrants, there is no detailed research on how religion and ethnicity both play an important role in the construction of the new ways that second-generation immigrants negotiate tradition, family, and finding personal happiness in the marriage process³. This research explores how families, religious traditions, and ethnic communities influence how members of this new ethnic community find marriage partners by the creation of new marital norms.

Methods

In this article I draw on data from observations and fifty in-depth interviews from 2001-2004 I collected as a researcher for the

2 Endogamy remains a significant issue in these three religious congregations (Kniss and Numrich 2007).

3 Rangaswamy 2000, Leanard 2003, Lessinger 1995, Purkayastha 2005, Foner 1997

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

Religion, Immigration and Civil Society in Chicago (RICSC) project⁴. I interviewed congregation leaders, school administrators, teachers and lay members at the RICSC sites.⁵ I also attended meetings of the South Asian Student Association, the Muslim Students Association, and the Hindu Student Organization at Chicago college campuses. I made my initial contacts at these student organizations via email list-servs. In addition to email contacts, I was also able to approach members from these groups at bake sales, informal social gatherings, and meetings.

Description of Sample: South Asian Immigrants in Chicago

Overall, my sampling techniques were a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. I maximized my range of sampling rather than used random sampling since I wanted to develop a comparative framework. Convenience sampling is valuable as it offers depth and contributes to theory building (Weiss 1994, 26). Snowball sampling is useful because it taps into social networks (Macdonald and Tipton 1993).

My sample consisted of forty-three Indian immigrants, six Pakistani immigrants, and one Bangladeshi immigrant. Eleven were first generation immigrants who were born and raised in South Asia, and thirty-nine were second-generation immigrants. I had a larger number of female respondents (37) than male respondents (13). This was most likely because of two factors. Initially, congregants at Islamic Foundation and BAPS Swaminarayan temple preferred same-sex interviewers. As a result, I interviewed mostly women at these sites. When I did interview men for this project, they were hesitant to speak at length about marriage and dating.

A limitation of my sample is that it consists of predominantly middle-class and professional immigrants, and this sample has

4 The Religion, Immigration and Civil Society in Chicago (RICSC) was a three-year project of Loyola University Chicago's McNamara Center for the Social Study of Religion, directed by Paul Numrich and Fred Kniss, and funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

5 See Kniss and Numrich 2007 for detailed descriptions of all of the research sites. The RICSC project examined immigration and religion at 16 religious sites in the Chicago area. I conducted interviews at the Muslim and Hindu sites including Islamic Foundation and BAPS Swaminarayan.

a large percentage of college-educated respondents. Most first-generation immigrants whom I interviewed were professionals, and all of the second-generation immigrants were college students or had completed college. This was largely because my research sites were two religious congregations in a Chicago suburb, one city congregation close to a university, and two Chicago universities.

This sample was religiously diverse for comparison purposes. I wanted to examine how marriage patterns vary among Hindu, Muslim and Christian South Asian immigrants. However, I was not able to obtain an equal number of Hindu, Muslim and Christian South Asian interviews. I interviewed fifteen Hindu immigrants, twenty-six Muslim immigrants, and nine Christian immigrants. I was easily able to find a larger sample size of consenting Muslim respondents because of my insider status as a second-generation Indian Muslim and my familial ties to the Muslim immigrant community. All of my Christian respondents were a result of snowball sampling from other Indian college students.

Importance of Marriage in South Asian Immigrant Families and Community

Marriage is the cornerstone of South Asian immigrant families and community life (Kniss and Numrich 2007). Married individuals are given a higher status in South Asian community than those that are unmarried. In addition, immigrant children are not looked at as adults until they have married, regardless of age and professional accomplishments as Farheen⁶, a 25 year old Muslim Indian woman, explained: “You are just a kid in the eyes of the community till you get married... Girls that are married but not even graduated from college and younger than me seem to be given more respect at community parties.” As a result, a large amount of pressure is put on South Asian immigrant children to marry. The importance of marriage is also reinforced by both South Asian immigrant and ethno-religious communities.

Entire ethnic communities make great efforts to find appropriate

6 All names of participants in this study have been changed. Names that I have used in this paper are pseudonyms that reflect the respondents' ethnic and religious backgrounds. I relied on Wittner's model of field-work to gather data and conduct interviews (Warner and Wittner 1998)

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

mates for single South Asian immigrants and have developed a “marriage economy” (Foner 1997). Marriage bureaus, matrimonial advertisements, and matchmakers catering to the South Asian immigrant community are quite common in urban areas such as Chicago or New York (Kniss and Numrich 2007). These services put immigrants in touch with families of potential mates. Parents take out advertisements for their children in South Asian periodicals. Matchmakers also organize formal and informal social events for young single South Asian immigrants. The respondents in my study spoke of a singles mixer in the basement of a mosque, dances sponsored by an Indian church, and the Hindu matchmaker at the temple. These events and institutions signify the importance of marriage in the South Asian American community⁷.

Within the South Asian immigrant community, there are also many informal networks that assist in making introductions. Some of these networks are loosely based in religious congregations; others are through groups of family friends. Sobia, an Indian Muslim woman, explained that her parents were very active in the local Hyderabad community. They hosted large dinners in her parents’ house often inviting families that had eligible sons. Sobia and Sannah both mentioned that “desi”⁸ weddings were a site that social networking happened for the purpose of introducing families that have marriageable children.

College campus organizations also facilitate opportunities for South Asian youth to meet and socialize with one another. In the past two decades, numerous Indian student associations, South Asian student associations, Muslim and Hindu student groups have formed on college campuses throughout the United States. Northwestern University, DePaul University, Loyola University-Chicago, and University of Illinois-Chicago all have active South Asian student groups and Muslim and Hindu student organizations.

⁷ See Kniss and Numrich for further discussion of my research on marriage in the Chicago South Asian community.

⁸ Desi is a “slang” term used by South Asian immigrants to refer to South Asian members of the community or as a descriptive term used to describe South Asian activities, customs, foods or events. The term “desi” is used by South Asian immigrants when they speak to each other (rather than by non-South Asian immigrants).

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

These universities organizations often arrange events and activities as well. Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrant youth are able to meet each other at university-sponsored events without family intervention or supervision.

Historically, ethnic and religious organizations were used by parents and elders in the community to organize social events for youth and college-aged students. However, more recently second-generation youth have taken it upon themselves to create organizations and arrange social gatherings where they can meet other South Asian immigrants without parental supervision. Organizations such as Netip (the Network of Indian Professionals) and CAMP (Council of American Muslim Professionals) were founded by second-generation South Asian immigrants primarily for social networking with other South Asian professionals. My respondents also spoke of organizations catering to Indian immigrants from specific regions. Other religiously based immigrant organizations such as KCYLN (Knanaya Catholic Youth League of North America), or ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) have sponsored singles events at their annual conferences. These organizations host dinners, picnics and annual conferences and are often used as arenas for introductions by parents as well as other family members and friends. One South Asian Muslim woman spoke of how eager her parents were for her to attend ISNA every year in hope of her getting introduced to a suitable partner. She mentioned that most of these introductions were done by parents.

Several of my student respondents spoke of these groups as a format to meet a potential spouse. Shehnaz, a Pakistani Muslim woman explained, "I know that some families come to these things hoping their kids will meet someone. I'm sure it has been successful for some... I do know people who go there for that purpose." Farheen, an Indian Muslim woman, described ISNA as a "meat market" for single Muslims. She understood that conventions were often an ideal place to meet other single South Asian immigrants but viewed conventions as a "meat market" because single women were judged based on physical attractiveness. Tahira, a Muslim respondent, explained that the emphasis on women to marry was

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

much stronger than it is for South Asian immigrant men:

Young women have a lot more pressure placed upon them to get married while they're still "young and beautiful" and therefore, "marriageable," whereas young men do not have to worry because there will always be more young women available for them to marry. A woman's ability to get married is inversely correlated with her age. It is almost a bad omen to have an unmarried female who is over 30 years of age living in a South Asian home.

In addition to physical beauty, age was a common theme that Tahira and other female respondents mentioned. South Asian immigrant women are under heavy pressure to marry in their early to mid-twenties. In the South Asian community, getting a young woman married by her mid-twenties is just as important if not more so, than educating her, a sentiment that is shared by both South Asians and South Asian Americans. Women that I interviewed spoke of "marriage pressure" that they felt after they turned 20. One Indian Muslim woman, Sanah, spoke of her engagement at age 19. Rekha, a Hindu woman, discussed her parents' constant nagging about marriage even though she had become financially independent and could support herself. Of course marriage is also important for South Asian immigrant men and their families, especially as they approach the age of 30. One young Muslim man, Tariq, spoke of his parents' concern over his 29 year-old brother: "They are obsessed with my brother right now. He's almost 30. They are about to lose their mind." Many of my respondents shared similar stories. Parents felt that getting their children married was a high priority in the Indian and Pakistani immigrant communities.

The Arranged Marriage

There are three patterns that I observed in terms of how South Asian immigrants are getting married: arranged marriages, semi-arranged marriages, and "love" marriages which refer to dating. Though the thought of an arranged marriage may seem strange and backwards to many Americans, it is still a common phenomenon

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

in many South Asian immigrant families. Purkayastha's work highlights that the arranged marriage continues to be negatively associated with oppressed South Asian women. "The imagery is based on the stereotype that the typical South Asian American female is one who is forced into arranged marriages and controlled through veiling, payment of dowry, and other customary practices" (Purkayastha 2005, 41). However my data demonstrates that there are several reasons why South Asian immigrants may choose to have an arranged marriage including the following: the maintenance of culture, as a safeguard against premarital sex and dating, as a way to appease family and community, and lastly as a strategy to find a mate as a "final resort" after failed attempts at dating. Many immigrant families interpret the arranged marriage as the key to maintaining religious and ethnic tradition. Marriage in Indian society symbolizes religious and ethnic meaning. Marriage is one means of the maintenance of ethnic and religious traditions, and maintaining the cultural purity of an immigrant group.

The arranged marriage also functions as a safeguard against dating, and protects youth from sexual promiscuity and premarital relations⁹. A third reason for the prevalence of arranged marriages is that some South Asian immigrants place great importance on their parents' wishes, often over their own personal preferences¹⁰. Lastly, I also argue that other immigrants, especially South Asian immigrant women, see it as a final way of finding a marriage partner; if they do not find their own spouse by a certain age, they would rather let their parents find them a mate than remain single. This often happens after a slew of unsuccessful dating relationships, or with those immigrants that feel too shy or introverted to look for their own mates. However, the factors that influence individual choices include family involvement, ethnic community, and religious ideology. These themes cross religious traditions.

The arranged marriage is a way to ensure the transmission of ethnic and religious ideas, morals, rituals and traditions:

9 Foner also found that arranged marriages can be seen in a positive light as a way "to avoid the frightening American dating scene, involving premarital sex and potential rejection" (Foner 1997, 965).

10 Foner and Lessinger both found that young people submit to arranged marriages largely because of their parents' wishes (Foner 1997, Lessinger 1995).

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

Marrying the 'right kind' of Indian is believed to preserve the culture from dilution, insuring the reproduction of Indian progeny and the re-production of Indian culture. It is for this reason that the arranged marriage is still a viable option for Indian Americans (Mukhi 2000, 64).

This idea transcends Indian culture to Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrant society as well. Similarly, South Asian families that promote the arranged marriage often believe that arranging children's marriages will protect them from American dating rituals, premarital relations and promiscuity. Gupta (1999) suggests that, "the traditional arranged marriage, with no input from the young people involved, is a system to control young women and keep them within parentally ordained boundaries," and this is one reason that the arranged marriage remains a common practice even in immigrant communities (110). The arranged marriage is often more strongly encouraged for South Asian women than for men. Leonard (1997) explains:

Another perceived threat to family life in the United States is the more open sexuality. South Asians generally place more emphasis on women's virginity at marriage, a goal achieved by arranged marriage for the brides and grooms at fairly young ages in South Asia but achieved more recently by prevention or control of dating (1997).

Therefore those families that promote arranged marriages strongly discourage dating.

My interviews and conversations indicate that the arranged marriage is still a common option for finding marriage partners in Hindu, Muslim and Indian Christian immigrant communities. The reasons supporting the arranged marriage as cited in my interviews were to maintain chastity until marriage by religious conservatives, maintain ethnic and religious ties for those tied to family and community, and as a final option for finding a marriage partner for liberal and cultural immigrants. Two Muslim immigrant

women in particular were open to the arranged marriage as a way of safeguarding themselves from any sexual relationships before marriage. Muslim, Christian and Hindu second-generation immigrants spoke of the arranged and semi-arranged marriage as ways to maintain ethnic and religious traditions. Three Muslim women and two Hindu women claimed that they saw the arranged marriage as a last resort, if they did not find partners before their late twenties.

As I mentioned before, acceptance of the arranged marriage was common amongst Hindu and Muslim immigrants. Four of the fifteen Hindu immigrants and eight of the twenty-six Muslim immigrants favored the arranged marriage. Though none of the Christian Indian immigrants preferred the arranged marriage, seven out of nine of them favored the semi-arranged marriage. Christian immigrants also mentioned that the arranged marriage was a common practice in Indian Christian immigrant congregations and communities, but that was not the preferred way of getting married for Christian second-generation immigrants.

Numrich (2002) writes that “Hinduism favors arranged marriage over romantic or ‘love’ marriages” (311). In the Hindu community, the arranged marriage is common in conservative and liberal Indian families. In the Hindu American community, the arranged marriage remains an option because it helps maintain caste, religious, and ethnic ties. Cultural and liberal Hindus also said in their interviews that the arranged marriage is often a fall back for young immigrants who do not successfully find mates on their own.

Swaminarayan respondents cited maintenance of ethnic and religious ties as a key reason for opting for an arranged marriage. Williams discusses the important of ethnic identity maintenance for Swaminarayans: “Gujarati ethnicity is essential to personal and group identity in this group, which adopts an ethnic strategy of adaptation in the face of internationalization and modernization. The sect is formed on a regional-linguistic basis, and virtually all followers are Gujarati’s” (Williams 1998, 852).” Therefore an arranged marriage ensures and reinforces both ethnic and religious endogamy for Swaminarayan Hindus. Radha, a 55 year Swaminarayan Hindu congregant, talked about the pitfalls of

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

the love marriage in terms of values and lifestyles, affirming that Swaminarayans have a distinct way of life:

Even the love marriages are a failure. Why? Because they don't look into the practical life, the habits and stuff, everybody has their different values and different lifestyles the way they have been raised, so we make them understand you'll watch out for this you know it will not work out in the long run.

Radha explained that since the elders of the community had lived experience they were able to guide younger congregants in terms of marriage matters. She saw the arranged marriage as a way to maintain tradition and lifestyle, both ethnic and religious. Payal, a 45-year-old Swaminarayan Hindu women, affirmed that arranged marriages remained popular in this community: "Most of them are doing arranged marriages about 70%, but there are some love marriages."

The arranged marriage is also still an option for some liberal South Asian Hindu women. Both Sushila and Meena, two culturally Hindu women, said that they did not prefer an arranged marriage but would not close it off as an option. Sushila specifically said she had been resisting an arranged marriage and had several serious relationships with non-Indians throughout college and graduate school. Her parents were adamant on her being open to their "introductions" to suitable Indian Hindu professional men. Sushila didn't think she was a primary candidate for arranged marriage because it felt so forced. She was also tired of the marriage pressure from her parents since she was quickly approaching age 30. In the following excerpt, Sushila talks about her anxiety related to the arranged marriage process:

It's just a screwed up way of meeting people in my opinion when you are brought up with all this stimuli that teach you how love should happen or romance. It's not like I go out to bars to meet people. That's weird for me too. I'm friends with them and then whatever. It's just a slow process based on friendship. This introduction thing is so artificial and contrived.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

It ruins things. So I am sorta kind of going back. And then it's never simple as much as my parents are relatively progressive. Then the parents call my parents. And it's never as hands off as they say it is. Or as much as I want it to be. My Mom is a feminist, and my parents are pretty progressive. So I am now sort of going back to stop (stop them from arranging my marriage). But I don't want to tell them to stop cus it keeps them occupied.

Later in this same interview Sushila added that since she was now 28, combined with parental pressure, she had recently become more open to the arranged marriage again. Another Hindu woman, Meena, had also dated throughout college but said she would be encouraged to reconsider the arranged marriage option as she became older. In her interview she quoted her mother as saying, "But if you are not married by the time you are 28 then I'm going to find someone." Meena also viewed the arranged marriage as a last resort if she too did not marry by age 30.

The arranged marriage remains popular amongst South Asian Muslim immigrants as well because it helps maintain religious and ethnic traditions, encourages chastity until marriage, and is an option for immigrant youth that do not find partners on their own. In Islamic cultures, the arranged marriage is also preferred because marriage has traditionally been viewed as a marriage between families, and marriage in Islam is viewed as a "religious duty" (Korson 1969, Numrich 2002). Islamic doctrine strongly promotes abstinence until marriage, and culturally South Asian Muslim families strongly emphasize premarital virginity, especially for girls and women. Several Muslim respondents cited chastity and modesty as a common reason for choosing an arranged marriage. One of the teachers at an Islamic School, Shireen, had an arranged marriage. Shireen wanted to get married but was not interested in dating. Her family initially met her husbands' family at an Indian Hyderabradi convention in the United States, and then arranged her marriage after several months. Naazneen, a single Indian Muslim woman, talked about her strong approval of the arranged marriage. She believed that it was the ideal way for a practicing Muslim to

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

meet a marriage partner. Naazneen also emphasized that modesty and premarital abstinence were two important factors in Muslim life, and she did not want to interact with her potential partner until after the marriage ceremony was performed. She did not want to even talk on the phone prior to marriage. Naazneen believed that talking on the phone was too intimate an activity to engage in before marriage.

Other Muslim women were also open to the arranged marriage option. Laila, an Indian Muslim woman, approved of the arranged marriage primarily because she trusted her parents, and did not want to disrespect them; she explained: “Personally I believe yes my parents will do what’s best for me. However, I should have a say in it and know the person before I get married”. Another single Muslim woman, Tahira, felt torn between having an arranged marriage and getting to know her potential mate; she said, “and I wouldn’t mind probably being alone with him, but I guess Islamically that wouldn’t be right. Islamically I shouldn’t be alone with a man (before I marry him)”. Tahira wanted to get to know her suitor before she got engaged, but she also felt that morally it was not right for her to spend time with him alone before they were married.

In my focus group with four young Muslim Indian women, the single women spoke of the arranged marriage as a last resort with responses similar to the single Hindu women with whom I spoke. They said that they hoped they would be able to find mates on their own through their own peer networks and hoped that they would know their spouses before marriage. Dahlia, one of the Indian Muslim women, said:

I need to know who I am marrying... ideally I’d like to be friends with the person first, I’d like to find the person on my own .. if I knew him really well I would treat the *Nikah* as dating and do that for a year and a half.

Dahlia hoped to know her husband on a platonic level before she got married, and explained that she would want to date her husband after performing a *Nikah*, the religious marriage

ceremony.

Each of the Christian Indian respondents also spoke of the continued practice of arranging marriages in the American context. Conservative Christian Indian theology further promotes the arranged marriage as it advocates chastity until marriage. Indian Christians also mentioned the maintenance of ethnic ties as a reason for choosing arranged marriages. As Nita, an Indian Christian woman, explained:

Arranged marriage is the thing. If you have a love marriage you need to make sure that the guy is from a good family or he's from the same religion as you are the same denomination as you are. Make sure your parents know about it. You know how it is, with a love marriage, they go crazy. And mainly they should see how the family is. That makes a big difference. The guy if he's settled, the guy he's fine and the family if they've got a big name, and stuff like that. Arranged marriages are more common.

Nita explained that in her family's Indian community, love marriages were accepted if two conditions were met: that the marriage was endogamous, in terms of religion and ethnicity, and the family was seen as respectable and honorable within the community. Obviously, parents had more control in making sure their children had suitors from a "good family" and maintaining religious endogamy if the marriage is arranged. Another Indian Christian woman, Sapna, mentioned that she was comfortable with having her parents find a marriage partner for her because she wanted to marry within the Malayalam ethnicity and the Catholic faith. For her, it was not a strong possibility that she would be able to find a partner without her parent's assistance and community ties. In addition, she mentioned that she trusted her parents' judgment in finding her a partner, and they had allowed her to reject suitors in the past.

Williams (1996) writes of the prevalence of the arranged marriage amongst Indian Christian churches and specifically amongst the Knanaya Christians. The Knanaya Christians have

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

strict rules regarding racial and religious endogamy (Ternikar, 2008). The arranged marriage helps preserve endogamy within the church community. He does note the exception of the Brethren Christians who allow dating if it is within the congregation. My informal conversations with Indian youth at the Brethren congregation also reflected the prevalence of both arranged marriages and dating.

The arranged marriage is still a common practice in the South Asian immigrant communities, especially among Muslim and Hindu immigrants. Twenty-four percent of the respondents in my sample were either in an arranged married or preferred to have an arranged marriage. None of the Christian respondents in my sample were in an arranged marriage, but more than half of them favored a “semi-arranged” marriage over a “love marriage” (see Table 1). The proponents of the arranged marriage tend to be Hindu, Muslim or Christian immigrants who are concerned with maintaining traditions, ethnic and religious. Many conservative Christian and Muslim immigrants also practice arranged marriages to discourage pre-marital sexual relations. The hesitant supporters of the arranged marriage are those single Hindu and Muslim immigrants who consider the arranged marriage as a final alternative. Finally, parents often support the arranged marriage because of their vested interest in maintaining strong family ties (Numrich 2002).

Race, ethnicity, class and religion all play significant roles in the marriage equation for arranged and non-arranged marriages in the South Asian immigrant community. Though often discouraged by family and community, “love marriages” and semi-arranged marriages are increasing in the South Asian community.

The Love Marriage

The alternative to the arranged marriage has historically been the “love marriage.” “Love marriage” is the term used by South Asian immigrants and South Asians to describe marriage that developed out of dating or a romantic. However, as mentioned previously, dating is still somewhat looked down upon, especially when South Asian immigrant women are involved. South Asian immigrant women are strongly encouraged to maintain ethnic traditions; the

arranged marriage is an example of an ethnic tradition that women are more harshly judged for rejecting. Indian women in the Diaspora are largely seen as the keepers of ethnic and religious tradition¹¹ (Maira 1999, Dasgupta and Das Dasgupta 1997). However, "Second-generation youth appear to be reproducing their parent's policing of ethnic boundaries in certain instances, a surveillance that often has a specifically gendered edge with a keen focus on women's behavior, particularly in sexuality" (Maira 1999: 49). This gendered understanding of dating and sexual norms is largely linked to social norms that have been reinforced by first generation South Asian immigrants (Gupta 1997). More educated women in India, according to previous studies, and in this study are more likely to have a love-marriage than an arranged marriage (Corwin 1977). In addition, dating is somewhat more acceptable in certain liberal Hindu and Christian immigrant communities than in Muslim immigrant communities. Dating is a place where religious norms are used to reinforce conservative gender and sexual norms.

Strict gender and sexual norms, along with family and community pressure, strongly discourage Muslim youth from dating openly. One of the reasons that first-generation parents of many South Asian immigrants discourage dating is because it is equated with sexual promiscuity. Nevertheless, dating does occur in all three religious traditions. Dating practices are contingent on family, religious ideology and ethno-religious community.

Five out of the thirteen Hindu women that I interviewed mentioned present or past dating relationships. Another two women talked about love marriages in the family. Saman, a Hindu Indian woman, even described her parents' marriage as a love marriage:

They eloped. Long story -- my Mom was arranged to be married to someone else she came home and was like wait Mom and Dad I met somebody and we've been together for 2 years and

11 In Maira's study of South Asian subculture in New York City, she found that, "Women are expected to carry the burden of embodying unsullied tradition, of chaste Indian womanhood, as has been pointed out in the discussions of the double standard that applies to sexual behavior for young South Asian American women as opposed to men" (Maira 1999:49).

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

he's leaving for England, and so my Mom said surprise I'm moving to England and that was a big no-no, totally mismatch of caste, wealth, and status, my Mom is My dad is South Indian and my Mom is North Indian, and it was just a huge cultural clash so they just eloped. I think ever since then they never believed in saying this is who you actually should be with.

Saman's experience was an anomaly. But since Saman's parents had not had an arranged marriage, they did not expect Saman to have one either. Manjaree, another Hindu woman, also spoke about her dating experiences. She also explained that her parents were divorced and did not have a lot of control on her personal life:

No my Mom has always been very open and she has given me a lot of freedom, she always said you can start dating when you are 21 kind of.

And then I started dating when I started college. I did tell her. I was interested and I am going to start dating. I have never dated anyone Indian. I have three relationships and they have all been with white guys. And she's known of all three of them.

The other Hindu respondents explained that arranged marriages were definitely commonplace in their parents' generation in India. Though a few of my respondents spoke of dating, the arranged marriage was still an option even for second-generation Hindu immigrants. Three of the BAPS Swaminarayan congregants spoke of dating for the purpose of marriage as permissible only after completing higher education. Veena, a BAPS Swaminarayan congregant, explained:

Well our religion teaches you should only date after you finish your education, and if you do date after you are done with your education, it should be for the sole purpose of getting married. So with the people I usually hang around, that's what they believe... actually our temple has this national biodata and it has names of each person, well whoever wants to participate

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

in it, and when its time to get married you can submit a biodata if you want.

Veena and other congregants also spoke of the arranged marriage as the preferable method in finding a marriage partner at the BAPS temple. The biodata database at the temple kept a catalog of single BAPS Swaminarayan congregants. "Biodata" refers to a resume of sorts that includes a single individual's educational background (sometimes including salary), family history, caste, birthday and often a picture. Not all religious congregations have a biodata database, but for Hindu and Muslim immigrant families with single children exchanging biodata is a common practice, and often the first step of arranging a marriage.

Though the arranged marriage is largely promoted by Muslim immigrant congregations, dating also occurs in the Muslim South Asian community, but is considered a social taboo largely because of religious doctrine which is reinforced by the larger ethnic family and communities. One Indian Muslim woman, Adeela, explained that most of her dating relationships had been kept secret from her parents. Ultimately, her parents hoped to arrange her marriage, but she was able to find Muslim men to date in hopes of finding her own marriage partner. Adeela did not think anything was "unIslamic" about dating, as long as she was dating a Muslim man. She mentioned that she had dated a few guys: "My friend made me go on a blind date last weekend - he was really nice and he goes to law school, good guy. I just wasn't attracted". Tariq, a Muslim Indian man, also spoke of dating, and was the only Muslim respondent who spoke of his family's approval of dating. Tariq explained that he saw dating as part of his "liberal," non-practicing past in high school and college. His dating experiences had been primarily with non-Muslim women. He added that he no longer dated since he had become a "practicing" Muslim because he now thought dating to be wrong:

The other day my Dad asked me why I don't have a girlfriend. I was like Dad, I went through that phase in undergrad and I kind gave up dating when I realized it just wasn't, that was

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

another thing that wasn't bringing any peace of mind. But my parents just can't seem to understand that concept, as long as it involves a Muslim girl (they want me to date), now if it's a non-Muslim girl then it's completely non-acceptable (to date or marry).

Tariq hoped to find a marriage partner through a friendship network with the hopes of remaining platonic until marriage. Other Muslim respondents did not speak about their own dating experiences but mentioned siblings, friends, and cousins who had dated. All of my respondents including the Islamic School principal and administrators did acknowledge that dating is becoming a more common occurrence in the Muslim immigrant community even though it is strongly discouraged.

Dating is prevalent in some Indian Christian communities if it is endogamous racially and religiously. One Catholic Indian woman, Mary, explained that arranged marriages are still common in her community but that some more liberal families such as hers did allow dating: "In the community it's mostly arranged, but like some parents are more liberal than others, like mine, like my parents are like as long as the guy is Indian Christian". Mary added that her family's Indian community is conservative and does not promote dating. Her parents have made an individual decision to allow her to date as long as she dates another Indian Christian. Another Catholic man, Joseph, talked about his dating process as well. Joseph said that his parents did try to arrange his marriage and they were not successful. He eventually met a white woman at his church and they dated before marrying. Joseph's parents were pleased that he had at least married a Catholic woman.

Dating remains a somewhat contentious topic in the South Asian immigrant community. Perhaps, dating will increase as more second and third generation immigrants are socialized in the United States. Dating is less common in religiously conservative communities of any South Asian traditions. Conservative religious congregations of Catholic, Hindu and Muslim backgrounds do not promote dating because it is a threat to religious and ethnic tradition. Some liberal South Asian families do allow dating. In

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

addition, there are South Asian immigrants who continue to date without family or community approval.

Of the people I interviewed (15 Hindus, 26 Muslims, 9 Christians), Hindu immigrants have the highest rate of approval of dating and love marriages. Nine out of fifteen of the Hindu immigrants I spoke with either had dated, were dating, or approved of dating as a method of getting to know a potential marriage partner. Only two of the twenty-six of the Muslim immigrants approved of dating or the love marriage. However, more than half, sixteen out of twenty-six, of the Muslim immigrants supported semi-arranged marriages.

None of the Christian immigrants I interviewed favored or were married through a strictly arranged marriage. Seventy-eight of the Christian immigrants preferred or had been married through a semi-arranged marriage, while two of the nine Christian immigrants favored or had dated before getting married.

To arrange or not to arrange: The creation of the “semi-arranged” marriage

I don't know if there are truly that many arranged marriages per se, meaning... Some third party elder says this person is for you and you are for this person and you get married. I think the more appropriate term in today's day and age in India and here is arranged introductions.

In the above quote, Rajiv, a male Hindu immigrant introduces “arranged introductions”. Are the alternatives to the arranged marriage such as “arranged introductions” replacing tradition? With the increase of South Asian immigrants in the United States since 1965 and the popularity of the Internet, new alternatives to the arranged or love marriage are possible. The most popular options that my respondents spoke of included arranged introductions or “semi-arranged marriages” and on-line services.

Arranged introductions also known as semi-arranged marriages include those situations where parents, relatives, family friends, or community members are involved in introducing their children to suitable or appropriate mates. The daughter or son can get to know

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

the potential mate by talking on the phone, through exchanging emails, and/or via group dates with chaperones. The semi-arranged marriages are encouraged by the children themselves because they do not want to date, yet they do not want parents strictly arranging their marriages. In addition, because many immigrant children have been socialized by notions of romantic love, they want to know their potential mates before they get married. But the semi-arranged marriage process does not encourage any premarital sexual relations. Partners in this process do not necessarily have a physical relationship before their wedding, often for religious reasons and sometimes for cultural ones.

In my research I found the semi-arranged marriage was always between two people of the same pan-ethnic and religious background. It is a way for second-generation immigrants to find like-minded partners. The youth that preferred a semi-arranged marriage were often religious but not necessarily cultural. They wanted to feel like they were involved in the marriage process and that they had some level of autonomy and agency¹².

Semi-arranged marriages were also a useful way for religious immigrants to find partners. One concern that young women spoke about was trying to find a partner that was at the same “religious level.” By speaking on the phone and emailing before marriage, young women are able to ask potential mates serious questions about religious values and practices. Shahista and Obed, a young Muslim couple, spoke of their marriage as a semi-arranged marriage. They were introduced to each other by a mutual Muslim friend, and they began to get to know each other by talking on the phone and going on chaperoned social outings. After six months of interacting, they were married.

The semi-arranged marriage allows for some level of freedom, romance, and self-selection without any physical intimacy before marriage. The semi-arranged marriage was the most popular option in my sample. Half of my entire sample preferred the “semi-arranged” marriage over the arranged-marriage or the love marriage. The “semi-arranged” marriage is popular among second-generation

¹² Foner highlights that the interplay between “culture, structure, and agency” is significant for understanding how immigrants reconstruct marriage and family patterns in the context of the American environment (Foner 2005, 165).

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

immigrants because it satisfies parents' requirements of endogamy, and it gives children a sense of autonomy. Noor explained that she wanted to have a "friendship" with her partner before she married him. She felt that if they talked on the phone and exchanged emails before they got married, she would get a chance to know him. The semi-arranged marriage also results in endogamous marriages. Therefore, it also helps maintain ethnic and religious traditions while also giving children agency in the marriage process. This method ultimately satisfies second-generation children and their immigrant parents.

Matrimonial on-line services are an option for South Asian immigrants as well. On-line services often help facilitate arranged and semi-arranged marriages. Parents and siblings look on-line also for mates for single family members. Single individuals also initiate relations through these sites. Popular matrimonial websites for South Asian immigrants include matrimonials.com, indianmarriages.com, indianlink.com and suitablematch.com. Through these sites South Asian singles are able to search databases for ideal matches. Characteristics most often included in these singles advertisements include ethnicity, religion, age, immigration status and education level. Another appeal of on-line marriage services is that it often decreases the involvement of parents and family in the arranged marriage process, where single people can look for appropriate matches on their own and make initial contact with potential partners without a chaperone. This alternative continues to grow in popularity as new online dating and marriage sites targeting South Asian immigrants continue to develop. One of my respondents, a Christian Indian, mentioned that he used an online dating service, match.com, in hopes of finding a marriage partner. Noor, a Muslim respondent, explained that many of her friends had recently joined naseeb.com in hopes finding a potential Muslim match. Perhaps in the near future, matrimonial web sites will cause a decrease in traditional arranged marriages in the United States.

More second-generation South Asians are dating or semi-arranging their marriages. However, the truly "arranged marriage" where parents select a mate for their children is still a practice in immigrant communities in the United States. In Rangaswamy's

(2000) study of Chicago Indian immigrants 71% of her respondents approved of arranged marriages (181). This most likely will remain a practice in South Asian immigrant communities because it allows parents to have great involvement in the selection of their children's' spouse, while ensuring the maintenance of ethnic and religious tradition and racial purity.

Discussion of Data and Conclusion

According to this research, dating and the love marriage is more common for Hindu immigrants than for Muslim or Christian immigrants, and the arranged marriage is more common among Muslim immigrants, than for Hindu or Christian immigrants.¹³ Both Muslim and Christian immigrants prefer the semi-arranged marriage over the arranged-marriage or dating option. Dating may not be a popular option for Muslim or Christian South Asian immigrants because it more likely results in exogamous marriages. In the case of Muslim immigrants, dating is also discouraged because of conservative gender and sexual norms that are reinforced by ethno-religious communities particularly for Muslim women (Schmidt

13 This analysis becomes more complicated when I separate those immigrants who label themselves as liberal or cultural from those immigrants who label themselves as conservative or "practicing". Eleven out of 15 of the Hindu immigrants considered themselves to be cultural liberal Hindus. Two of the 26 Muslims claimed that they were cultural Muslims rather than religious Muslims. Four of the 9 Christian immigrants I interviewed also claimed that they identified with liberal Catholicism. When I compared liberal immigrants to conservative immigrants, I found that none of the liberal immigrants preferred the arranged marriage. Five out of eighteen of the liberal immigrants supported or were in a semi-arranged marriage, and more than half (thirteen out of eighteen) of the liberal immigrants preferred a love marriage. Out of the thirty-two conservative immigrants, only two preferred a love marriage, eighteen preferred a semi-arranged marriage, and twelve preferred an arranged marriage. I can hypothesize that in my sample, liberal immigrants prefer dating as a method to getting married while conservative immigrants prefer the arranged or "semi-arranged" marriage option. Conservative immigrants interpret arranged marriages as a way to safeguard religious and cultural identities. In addition, I found the semi-arranged option to be popular amongst conservative immigrants regardless of religious tradition and particularly with Christian and Muslim immigrants (see table 1). These findings reinforce the idea that for religious reasons, conservative South Asian immigrants, Christian and Muslim immigrants prefer semi-arranged and arranged marriages to the love marriage option because it facilitates religious endogamy.

2004).

Lastly, arranged marriages are a way to retain ethnic and cultural traditions. Traditional practices of marriage carry meanings of ethnic and religious authenticity even to second-generation South Asian immigrants. The semi-arranged marriage is a significant creation of a new marital norm that allows for the maintenance of ethnic and religious traditions but also appeases second-generation immigrants in their pursuit of personal happiness or romantic love. Second-generation immigrants interpret the semi-arranged marriage as a way to maintain their cultural identities while also gaining the approval of their families and ethno-religious communities.

However, this research highlights that religion matters significantly in these marital decisions¹⁴. This was clearly evident in the comparison of religiously conservative Hindus, Muslims, and Christians with religiously liberal Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The arranged and semi-arranged marriages remain popular because they are both ways that help conservative immigrants find partners within their religion. Only two of the conservative immigrants favored a love-marriage over a semi-arranged or arranged marriage. Yet, none of the liberal immigrants preferred an “arranged marriage”. Religious conservatism influences the marriage choices for South Asian immigrants. Comparing immigrants from the three traditions, I found Muslim immigrants to have the highest number of arranged marriages, and the lowest number of love marriages. In addition, Hindu immigrants had the highest number of love marriages. This is most likely so because unlike Indian Catholics and South Asian Muslims, Hindu immigrants do not have any specific religious codes on exogamy (Lawrence 2002, Courtright and Harlan 1995). Islam and Catholicism are both religious traditions based on religious law and scripture-based norms¹⁵. Acceptance of exogamous marriage in Hindu families is often contingent on level of religiosity, sect, caste, class, region of origin and educational level (Bacon 1996,

14 Kurien’s research on Indian immigrants in the United States also highlights the importance of religious identity for Indian immigrants. Her research focuses on Hindu and Muslim immigrants (1997 and 2001).

15 For Muslims, Islamic law (Shariah) based on Hadith and Quran clearly outlines that Muslim men can marry women of the book (Muslim, Jewish or Christian) but Muslim women must marry within the faith.

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

Courtright and Harlan 1995, Fenton 1988). The practice of Hinduism varies greatly between regions of India (Courtright and Harlan 1995, Fenton 1988).

An extended discussion of arranged marriage practices highlights the great emphasis in South Asian immigrant communities to maintain endogamy for both ethnic and religious reasons. However, this research also suggests that religious tradition or religiosity (conservative versus liberal) does influence how some South Asian immigrants marry. Future research should emphasize changes in who immigrants actually marry, particularly along religious lines as third-generation immigrants come of age. This future research should also develop a comparative analysis within the community among class-lines.

Table 1:

Relationship between Religion and Method of Marriage

<i>Religion</i>	Arranged	Semi-arranged	Love	Total
<i>Hindu</i>	27% N=4	13% N=2	60% N=9	100% N=15
<i>Muslim</i>	31% N=8	61% N=16	8% N=2	100% N=26
<i>Christian</i>	0 N=0	78% N=7	22% N=2	100% N=9
<i>Total</i>	24% N = 12	50% N=25	26% N=13	100% N=50

Table 2:

<i>Religion</i>	Arranged	Semi-arranged	Love	Total
<i>Conservative</i>	38% N=12	56% N=18	6% N=2	100% N=32
<i>Liberal</i>	0% N=0	28% N=5	72% N=13	100% N=18
<i>Total</i>	24% N = 12	46% N=23	30% N=15	100% N=50

REFERENCES

- Arber, Sara. 1993. "Designing Samples" In *Researching Social Life*, ed. Nigel Gilbert, 255-269. London: Sage Publications.
- Bacon, Jean. 1996. *Life Lines: Community, Family and Assimilation among Asian Indian Immigrants*. New York: Oxford University press.
- Bradley, David. 1983. "Duress and Arranged Marriages." *The Modern Law Review*. 46 (4): 499-504.
- Corwin, Lauren A. "Caste, Class and the Love-Marriage: Social Change in India" *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 39: 823-831.
- Courtright, Paul B. and Lindsey Harlan. Eds. 1995. *From the Margins of Hindu Marriage: Essays on Gender, Religion and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dasugupta, Sayantani and Shamita and Dasgupta. 1997. "Women in Exile: Gender Relations in the Asian Indian community". In *Contours of the Heart: South Asians map North America*. Sumaina Maira and Rajini Srikanth, eds. Pp. 381-400. New York: Asian American Writer's Workshop.
- Fenton, John Y. 1988. *Transplanting Religious Traditions: Asian Indians in America*. New York: Prager Publishers.
- Foner, Nancy. 1997. "The Immigrant Family: Cultural Legacies and Cultural Changes." *International Migration Review* 31(4): 961-974.
- Foner, Nancy. 2005 "The Immigrant Family: Cultural Legacies and Cultural Changes" in *The New Immigration*, eds. Orozco, Orozco and Quin. New York: Routledge.
- Gans, H.J. 1979 "Symbolic ethnicity: the future of ethnic groups

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

and cultures in America. *Ethnic and Racial studies* 2 (1):1-20.

Gupta, Monisha Das. 1997. "What is Indian About You: A Gendered, Transnational Approach to Ethnicity." *Gender and Society* 11: 572-596.

Gupta, Sangeeta. 1999. "Walking on the Edge: Indian American Women Speak Out on Dating and Marriage." In *Emerging Voices: South Asian Women Redefine Self, Family and Community*, ed. Sangeeta Gupta, 120-45. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Jana, Rana. 2000. "Arranged Marriages, Minus the Parents". New York Times Online, August 1st. Retrieved October 15, 2003.
Kniss, Fred and Paul D. Numrich. 2007. *Sacred Assemblies and Civic Engagement: How Religion Matters for America's Newest Immigrants*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Korson. 1969. "Student Attitudes toward mate Selection in a Muslim Society: Pakistan". *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 31(1):153-165.

Kurien, Prema, "Becoming American by Becoming Hindu: Indian Americans Take Their Place at the Multicultural Tabe^l", in: R. Stephen Warner, Judith G. Wittner (eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora. Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998: 37-70.

Kurien, Prema, "Religion, Ethnicity and Politics: Hindu and Muslim Indian Immigrants in the United States", in: *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24, 2, 2001: 263-293

Lawrence, Bruce B. 2002. *New Faiths, Old Fears: Muslims and Other Asian Immigrants in American Religious Life*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Leonard, Karen. 1997. *The South Asian Americans: New Americans*

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

Series. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

- Leanard, Karen. 2003. *Muslims in the United States: The State of Research.* New York: Russel Sage Foundation.
- Lessinger, Johanna. 1995. *From the Ganges to the Hudson: Indian immigrants in New York City.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Macdonald, K. and Tipton, C. 1993. "Using Documents." In *Researching Social Life*, ed. Nigel Gilbert. 58-72. London: SAGE.
- Maira, Sumaina. 1999. "Identity Dub" The Paradoxes of an Indian American Youth Subculture (New York Mix." *Cultural Anthropology* 14(1): 29-60.
- Mody, Pervez. 2002. "Love and the Law: Love-Marriage in Dehli." *Modern Asian Studies* 36 (1): 223-256.
- Mukhi, Sunita. 2000. *Doing the Desi Thing: Performing Indianess in New York.* New York: Garland Publishing.
- Numrich, Paul, D. J. Wall, D. Browning, W. J. Doherty, and S. Post. 2002. *Marriage, Health, and the Professions: The Implications of New Research into the Health Benefits of Marriage for Law, Medicine, Ministry, Therapy, and Business.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Purkayastha, Bandana. 2005. *Negotiating Ethnicity.* New Jersey: Rutgers University press. Rangaswamy, Padma. 2000. *Namaste America: Indian Immigrants in an American Metropolis.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Schmidt, Garbi.2004. "Islamic Identity Formation Among Young Muslims: The Case of Denmark, Sweden, and the United States." *Journal of Muslim Affairs* 24 (April) 31-25.

Ternikar–To Arrange or Not

- Ternikar, Farha. "Indian Christians and Marriage Patterns" forthcoming in 2008 in (eds) Selva J. Raj and Knut A. Jacobsen. *South Asian Christian Diasporas: Invisible Diasporas in North America and Europe*. UK: Ashgate Publishing.
- Warner, R. Stephen and Judith G. Wittner, eds.1998. *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Weiss, Robert. 1994. *Learning from Strangers*. New York: Free Press.
- Williams, Raymond Brady. 1992., ed. *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Williams, Raymond Brady. 1996. *Christian Pluralism in the U.S.: The Indian Immigrant Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, Raymond Brady. 1998. "Training Religious Specialists for a Transnational Hinduism: A Swaminarayan Training Center" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66: 841-862.

ARE WE HAPPY YET? : RE-EVALUATING THE EVALUATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Kerin Gould
University of California, Davis**

As I was working on research into Indigenous community development, I wanted to get an overview of how things are going – are projects improving well-being? What is working and what isn't? I found I couldn't get a clear multi-dimensional picture. So I had to wonder, about evaluation criteria and what the alternatives were. How can we, as academics and researchers and allies, make sense of the available information in such a way that our work is meaningful to the Indigenous communities we work with?

As academics, our work can affect processes and practices carried out in the different ethnic communities that we work with. We can make ourselves more useful and relevant if we recognize that these peoples have their own measurements and criteria and work their concepts into our methods and analyses. It is tempting to claim egalitarian ideals as the reason for using the same measurements for deeply different peoples, as if we all prioritize goals identically and organize using the same protocols, but it can also negate significant aspects of cultural and individual identities and can result in misleading interpretations. Conventional melting-

pot thinking on diversity often implies that everyone basically wants the same things, assuming Euro-American values represent universal goals. This assumption can diminish community satisfaction with a project as has been seen in many cases of top-down development. In spite of globalization, societies are not really melting pots – more like minestrone soup where each ingredient can be savored, even if some would prefer a cream-of-mainstream. Indigenous peoples, for example, live within nation-states and societies that are based on entirely different worldviews, so shouldn't assessment of their unique issues reflect their distinct values and criteria?

In looking at different community development projects of Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, certain standard indicators paint a rosy picture, but do these add up to improved well-being¹⁶ according to what the communities in question consider most important for living? What kind of evaluation is useful to ensure that community projects deliver the most meaningful contentment and well-being to Indigenous communities? Most importantly, how can Indigenous people measure whether they are succeeding on their own terms, in ways that respect and support traditional knowledge, philosophy, and social protocols, self-determination, cultural continuance and thriving individuals?

Positive Economic Indicators Show Improvements

After centuries of the most severe poverty brought about by confiscation of sustaining resources, subjugation to ethnocentric and often unethical laws, categorization as incompetent to manage their own assets, dispersal to cities and proletarianization, assimilation without equality, and the resulting physical/mental/spiritual health damage, some Indigenous people are seeing some improvement and economic success. Certainly Indigenous populations are

¹⁶ I use the term “well-being” here to imply a more holistic, inclusive sense and because the term “quality of life” has previously been associated with externally generated criteria which are often, ironically, too quantitative in the hopes of presenting objective and comparable data. “Well-being” can comprise physical, mental, and spiritual health of both the individual and the community collective as well as the contentment with the perceived levels of physical, mental, and spiritual health. Certainly this definition begs a combination of both objective, material criteria as well as subjective and culturally specific criteria.

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

recovering, some are beginning thrive, and one might say they are developing in ways that parallel those of non-Native counterparts. Many diagnostic methods indicate that Indigenous communities are in better conditions than they were only a few short decades ago, in what might seem like a miraculous economic recovery.

In the US, 2002 Census¹ reports that 201,387 American Indian/Alaska Native-owned businesses (not including tribally owned businesses, as in the previous census) rang up receipts of \$26,872,947,000, and as of 2004, there are an estimated 90,730 majority-owned, privately-held firms owned by AI/AN women in the U.S., employing nearly 129,000 people and generating \$12.4 billion in sales. Between 1997 and 2004, the number of Native American and Alaska Native women-owned firms increased by 69%, employment grew by 73%, and sales rose by 83%.² In 2005 a Harvard University Project On American Indian Economic Development report on socio-economic changes showed that significant material improvements have taken place over the last decade for U.S. Native people as seen in this table:

Changes On Reservations Other Than Navajo
*(Changes 1990– 2000 presented in points unless indicated as %; OTSAs excluded)*³

	Non- Gaming	Gaming	U.S.
Real per capita income	+21%	+36%	+11%
Median household income	+14%	+35%	+4%
Family poverty	-6.9	-11.8	-0.8
Child poverty	-8.1	-11.6	-1.7
Deep poverty	-1.4	-3.4	-0.4
Public assistance	+0.7	-1.6	+0.3
Unemployment	-1.8	-4.8	-0.5
Labor force participation	-1.6	+1.6	-1.3
Overcrowded homes	-1.3	-0.1	+1.1
Homes lacking complete plumbing	-4.6	-3.3	-0.1
Homes lacking complete kitchen	+1.3	-0.6	+0.2
College graduates	+1.7	+2.6	+4.2
High school or equivalency only	-0.3	+1.8	-1.4
Less than 9th grade education	-5.5	-6.3	-2.8

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

Geographic area and kind of business	All firms ¹		Firms with paid employees			
	Firms (number)	Sales and receipts (\$1,000)	Firms (number)	Sales and receipts (\$1,000)	Employees (number)	Annual payroll (\$1,000)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
UNITED STATES						
Total for all sectors	201 387	26 872 947	24 496	21 986 696	191 270	5 135 273
Forestry, fishing & hunting, and agricultural support services (NAICS 113-115) ³	4 594	205 165	157	108 398	906	24 154
Mining	1 028	482 392	170	415 410	3 421	174 184
Utilities	287	31 834	25	26 854	81	3 365
Construction	32 253	6 054 570	4 892	4 865 541	31 340	1 071 804
Manufacturing	6 004	3 125 239	1 385	3 015 865	19 990	657 161
Wholesale trade	4 252	2 162 013	793	2 048 396	5 698	191 090
Retail trade	20 494	4 967 332	2 971	4 362 120	21 122	437 272
Transportation and warehousing ⁴	9 958	941 814	850	500 753	4 784	129 177
Information	2 618	368 492	271	315 694	4 076	118 674
Finance and insurance ⁵	4 925	556 736	826	433 968	3 231	106 066
Real estate and rental and leasing	9 277	715 084	626	342 278	2 324	69 367
Professional, scientific, and technical services	22 505	2 090 586	3 271	1 569 868	15 310	640 738
Management of companies and enterprises	66	39 905	66	39 905	991	51 813
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	15 712	1 698 760	1 844	1 504 568	31 164	637 863
Educational services	3 609	148 085	260	110 591	2 913	40 588
Health care and social assistance	24 428	1 233 819	2 123	920 486	17 520	369 353
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	9 249	392 793	272	255 455	2 577	117 999
Accommodation and food services	3 605	714 564	2 183	674 918	17 441	177 278
Other services (except public administration) ⁶	26 651	934 781	1 700	446 604	6 328	115 856
Industries not classified	112	9 024	112	9 024	64	1 471

U.S. Census Bureau, American Indian- And Alaska Native-Owned Firms: 2002 Economic Census, Survey Of Business Owners⁴

Gaming is clearly not the only contributor to economic upturn, and in fact non-gaming tribes' average wages are higher as are housing improvements on those reservations.⁵ Throughout the Americas, Native communities and individuals have built up all kinds and sizes of enterprises from wild rice or specialized corn production to small airlines, clothing design, Indigenous music recording companies, radio stations, handmade soaps, software design, legal and technical advising, coca-leaf teas and candies, hotels and eco/cultural tourism, wind farms, adobe construction, sustainable forestry and fisheries, herbal medicines, real estate and banks.⁶

In Canada, the National Aboriginal Environmental Development Board reports that aboriginal enterprise is growing - even faster than the national averages in many fields. There are now over 27,000 Aboriginal entrepreneurs, a 30% increase from 1996 to 2001, more than nine times that of the Canadian average.⁷ The number of manufacturing, transportation and warehousing businesses was almost five times higher in 2001 than in 1996, and the number of Aboriginal businesses operating in professional, scientific and

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

technical, education, health and social services has more than doubled since 1996.

Many tribally owned businesses are also thriving, often combining several complementary interests such as forestry and a mill or construction business, for example. The Wisconsin Ho-Chunk tribe invested casino money in diverse businesses - hotels, real estate, stores, two Internet companies, a housing fabrication company, and a telecom hardware company to name a few and generated profit growing from zero to \$25 million in revenues in five years.⁸

For Central and South America, it is very difficult to find comparable information that distinguishes the entrepreneurship and economic projects of Indigenous individuals and communities as distinct from those of "peasants" or "rural poor". There is, however, lots of discussion on emigration as a major source of income and outside agencies' macro-economic plans and policies to create development for and in the territories of Indigenous people. Still, as in the north, Indigenous people have been increasing their business acumen and expanding markets for goods and services. Emigrants often bring home computers or fax machines with which they can stay in touch with remote clients or maintain networks between the home community and customers abroad. One example is that of the diaspora of people from Otavalo in Ecuador, whose fame as purveyors of Andean textiles has spread with their migrants to Europe and North America. At a California powwow recently, Indigenous vendors from the south were selling warm alpaca sweaters with dream-catcher and eagle designs to appeal to the northern Natives' tastes. While one Comanche vendor said she did not approve of the appropriation of northern Native designs, even by other Indigenous people, others were busy buying.

Behind the business successes, there has been an increase in both technical business assistance/training and loans for community development and individual entrepreneurship. Agencies like the Community Development Financial Institution Fund, part of the U.S. treasury, statewide chambers of commerce, and the Small Business Administration (and in Canada, agencies such as Industry Canada's Aboriginal Business Canada program and the First

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

Citizens' Fund in British Columbia) provide a number of support services to Native entrepreneurs and tribal businesses, technical assistance and loans,⁹ networking and conferences.

In addition to business growth, Indigenous people have improved their ability to carry out community projects by working with foundation support. One of the most positive trends for Indigenous economic improvement is an increase in grantmaking, lending and technical assistance. There are programs that provide capacity-building for non-profits and tribal organizers, rotating loan or micro-lending cooperatives, and education for managing family finances. Many of these feature Indigenous people supporting other Indigenous people as allies who can relate to the recipients' organizing styles, goals, needs, philosophies, and problems especially well. In Canada human resource programs have helped thousands return to school or work, and

“Aboriginal Financial Institutions (e.g. Aboriginal Capital Corporations and Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations) currently disburse an impressive \$70 million in loans to almost 2,000 Aboriginal businesses each year...

Aboriginal people and communities continue to negotiate more and more revenue-sharing and impact benefit agreements.”¹⁰

In addition to support for businesses, Indigenous communities with a bit of surplus are supporting projects inter-tribally and even across the Americas. Giving, newly constituted as philanthropy, has deep and meaningful roots throughout Native cultures. In communities where a person who has given away a great deal is respected more than one who has accumulated a great deal or where the word “stingy” is the worst possible insult, it is not surprising that in times of economic improvements Native people cultivate and formalize their own giving practices and organize philanthropic support. Tribes and organizations have been able to respond generously to the needs of Native and non-Native people. For example, in October of 2001 *Indian Country Today* reported on the response from Native tribes to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Towers: for example, the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut donated \$1 million, the Rumsey Rancheria of California contributed \$200,000 and the Prairie Band Potawatomi \$100,000, while other

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

tribes quietly contributed goods and services.¹¹ Several tribes, the National Congress of American Indians, and the National Indian Gaming Organization later donated large amounts to support other tribes and non-Native neighbors hit by Hurricane Katrina, although some of those dollars apparently never reached their intended beneficiaries, perhaps lost in the bureaucracy of large-scale disaster relief.¹² Several other organizations that are mainly Native-run, like the Seventh Generation Fund, Honor the Earth, and First Nations Development Fund support a variety of community projects, while many casino tribes contribute to regional concerns in order to foster goodwill among their neighbors.

On the more technical side of Indigenous networking, a study conducted at Iowa State University in 2002 reports that e-commerce helps Indigenous businesses eliminate middlemen and supports networking between other Natives at home, on other reservations and elsewhere.¹³ As this research shows, not only have Indigenous people begun using e-commerce for direct sales of their artisan work or specialty crops and promotion of their eco-tourism offerings, but they are also using their social, cultural, natural and human capital to create and sustain businesses.

Social Indicators Paint a Different Picture

With all of the economic improvements noted above, one would expect to see equally dramatic improvements reflected in social indicators. Social improvements certainly exist in terms of material improvements and some services. Infant deaths decreased from 15.2 to 8.6 between 1983-2002, and 71% of expecting mothers received prenatal care. School readiness in 3-5 year olds has gone from 35% in 1993 to 39% in 2001, with 5 year olds reaching 71% and 80.7% of children use computers at school and 65.2% use them at home. ¹⁴ These important and long over-due improvements would paint a very rosy picture, and one might be tempted to see examples of economic improvement as a sign that Indigenous peoples' problems have been resolved.

However, in a scan of social indicators, the things that did not improve or worsened were most notable.¹⁵ Violence against women continues to be a concern of indigenous people that is far from being

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

resolved or ameliorated by economic gains.¹⁶ Striking disparities in quality of life between Native populations and the nations around them hurt not only due to the inadequacies themselves but also in the comparisons as other issues may underlie economic, and social disparities (and vice versa). For example, in Canada where aboriginal unemployment rates continue to be double the national average and incomes are lower than the national levels by 40-50%¹⁷, a number of social problems continue to flourish, including the high rates of violence against and disappearance of Indigenous women. Amnesty international attributes this mainly to the social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women that has “pushed a disproportionate number of Indigenous women into dangerous situations that include extreme poverty, homelessness and prostitution,”¹⁸ all of which makes them more vulnerable to attack, and unlikely to receive police protection or assistance when attacked. Amnesty International has traced this violence to

“a broader spectrum of social stress and turmoil that has resulted from government policies imposed on Indigenous peoples without their consent...the erosion of culture, the uprooting of generations of Indigenous women, the separation of children from their parents, and a cycle of impoverishment, despair and broken self-esteem that continues to grip many Indigenous families.”¹⁹

This composite of social problems will not be resolved simply through increased incomes and employment rates.

For Indigenous people in Latin America, though it is again difficult to find disaggregated social indicators, some scattered information can paint a panorama from which to draw ideas if not conclusions. According to Mexico’s National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People²⁰, over half of Indigenous people survive on minimum wage or less, including a large number with no visible income at all. Without even considering the effects of conspicuous national disparities, it is clear that the modernization of Mexico, benefits (?) of NAFTA and globalization, and even the improvements generated by some Indigenous communities and their allies have not reached all of Indigenous Mexico. These disparities, and resulting urbanization and emigration, exacerbate

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

relative purchasing power and access to resources for resolving social and health problems, create new family and community breakdowns, dilute identity and collective knowledge bases, diminishing well-being on many levels. A report by World Bank analysts²¹ notes that many poverty-related social indicators are not improving as hoped for:

- Indigenous people recover more slowly from economic crisis.
- The indigenous poverty gap is deeper, and shrank more slowly over the 1990s.
- Being indigenous increases an individual's probability of being poor and this relationship was about the same at the beginning and at the close of the decade.
- Indigenous people continue to have fewer years of education, but the gap is narrowing, and education outcomes are substantially worse for indigenous peoples, which is indicative of problems in education quality. Increases in education do not result in the same gain in earnings for Indigenous people.
- Child labor is still needed by many families and interferes with schooling
- Children continue to suffer from malnutrition.
- Indigenous people, especially women and children, continue to have less access to basic health services.

And the Pan American Health Organization continues to report dismal health conditions and disparities for Indigenous populations. In their report "Health of the Indigenous Population in the Americas", presented to the 138th Session of the Executive Committee in Washington, D.C., in June 2006, they described the current situation:

"Traditionally, indigenous populations have suffered from disproportionately high rates of maternal and infant mortalities, malnutrition, and infectious diseases. However, these populations become more mobile, less isolated, increasingly urban, and located in border areas, issues such as use of drugs and alcohol, suicide, sexually transmitted diseases, and loss of influence of traditional health practices have become increasingly important. Although their disease burden and transitional-stage epidemiological profile is similar to other

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

disadvantaged groups in the Region, their poor health status is compounded by discrimination and inequity within the health system. Indigenous populations comprise the majority in several countries and geographic areas, but 40% of the indigenous population lacks access to conventional health-related services and 80% rely on traditional healers as their principal health care provider.”²²

If several decades of international efforts in development have not painted a more positive picture of basic, physical well being, perhaps we should question the goals, priorities, and measurements of development to date. Even in the United States, where health and mortality statistics have been improving, Natives between 15 and 24 years of age commit suicide 3.3 times more than the rest of the country and 25-44 year old Native die from chronic liver diseases 7.1 times more than the rest of the US and from suicide 2.1 times more often. Native youth attend too many funerals. Two Ojibwe females in their early twenties told me they had been to more than twenty funerals in their lifetimes, several in the past year alone. Certainly, the grief and despair caused by high rates of illness and death in the community can have mental and behavioral health consequences, perhaps more so because these health disparities seem inevitably linked to being Indigenous.

Invisible to quantitative evaluations are the many social nuances particular to each community that are certain to be affected by economic changes for better or worse. For example, divisions within communities between “progressives” and “traditionalists” or even between extended families are exacerbated by controversial project proposals, especially when a community’s economy is precarious. Examples of this include the recent trend toward reshuffling tribal enrollment once a tribe becomes wealthy or the violence stirred up between neighboring Ecuadorian tribes when tantalizing oil money is available.

In some cases, the indicators of success may not be compatible with Native ways of evaluation. One important concern is that only individuals’ needs or benefits are measured, but the well being of the collective entity is not considered – also a problem with human rights, in some cases. Other criteria can be deeply mismatched, as

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

in the United States' General Allotment Act of 1887 (known as the Dawes Act), where the ideal was to create self-employed farmers through land legislation, or the Relocation policy of the 1950s where assimilation was seen as key to economic success; mechanization, as in a tortilla factory that did not replicate homemade taste; or the Green Revolution of the 1960s – 70s that created dependence on expensive chemicals and machinery as well as social divisiveness. All of these could have been measured based on increased productivity and judged successful programs. Top-down and one-size-fits-all projects, seemingly proven to be successful according to some criteria, have caused innumerable social consequences that perhaps could have been foreseen from an emic point of view. Project designers that are not endogenous are not place-based, can leave or be distant from the place of the project and can ignore (intentionally or unintentionally) a large amount of community and geographically specific knowledge needed for development to be successful in a lasting and significant way is can be overlooked in favor of established mainstream technology and methodology.

Questioning Current Indicators

If projects that successfully make economic change don't better well-being — for whatever reason — perhaps we are not evaluating success in a way that makes this happen. After all, criteria and evaluations inform the goals of subsequent projects.

While economic indicators tell us little about the non-material well-being of a community, social indicators tell us much more about health and happiness, as well as families and individuals' human development. However, neither tells us how they connect and whether any community projects affect a deeper and broader well-being. If evaluations make no connection between these, then how can anyone design new projects that will satisfy the needs, visions, and protocols of their community? Does the number of schools or student attendance tell us if students are smarter or better prepared for life with culturally relevant and appropriate intellectual development? Does increased participation in tribal or national government ensure consensus and cooperation? Does the number of hospitals or doctors tell us whether people are healthy

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

– or does it say that there is such poor health that these services are in great demand? Whether the community is healthier or not, a large number of medical employees can lower unemployment rates and raise average income – even if the employees were hired from outside the area. In some cases, such as coal mines, more jobs have meant health, environmental, and/or family problems. Does the number of businesses in an Indigenous region indicate a level of sustainable self-sufficiency or imply dependence? Will social problems come attached to increased income? Does income level or employment rate tell us whether people feel that they are contributing members of their community? There is no question that schools, clinics, and jobs are important, but they are not the same thing as well-being. How does a Native community (or any community for that matter) recognize whether it is thriving on a meaningful, integral level or just improving the look of statistics?

For example, if a community with a casino hands out large per capita checks and has excellent health insurance and services but has an alarmingly high domestic violence rate, can this community be said to experience well-being? And is there a relationship between these two occurrences? In the Hñañhu community of San Pablito, the number of cement-block houses, cars, phones and toilets has risen thanks to income sent home by emigrant workers, but the community also has its first two cases of AIDS and an increase in abandoned children and elders (personal communication, Luisa Santos, November 2004). Similarly, the Navajo nation reported its first cases of AIDS in 1987, several years into the epidemic. What brought this about? Communities receiving emigrant or urban money may experience associated violence, assimilation, gender role shifts, dependence, language and knowledge loss, neglect of lands, single parent families and abandonment of children and elders – that one can hardly say with any certitude that the community as a whole is thriving more than it did before the young men went away to work.

Challenging Universalized Criteria

As academics and allies of grassroots practitioners, we can challenge universalized evaluation methods, which may be

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

well-intentioned in their pursuit of equanimity, but are full of problems. The United Nations has been working on “Millennium Development Goals” which have identified universal goals – addressing basic needs that people should not be without – but the measurement systems continue to work on a national level and don’t always distinguish Indigenous people’s status. Indigenous activists have voiced their concerns. In all fairness, the United Nations is a coalition of nation-states and must work within these structures, but this sort of evaluation can make it seem that Latin American countries are very close to meeting these MDGs, even though the Indigenous quality of life is often far from adequate. In the United States the disparity between statistics on education, infrastructure, employment for the nation and those for Lakota or Hoopa reservations is startling, as is the disparity between Mexico’s national averages and Tarahumara communities, Brazil’s and those of Indigenous Amazon communities, etc.

Fortunately, alternative indicators have emerged that clearly reflect the worldviews and values of their practitioners. For example, the Happy Planet Index, developed by the New Economics Foundation, incorporates three separate indicators: ecological footprint, life-satisfaction and life expectancy. Conceptually, it is straight forward and intuitive: $HPI = \text{Life satisfaction} \times \text{Life expectancy} \div \text{Ecological Footprint}$. The HPI juxtaposes average years of happy life and planetary resources consumed to conclude that our resources can be better used toward the ultimate end of long, happy lives. “This conclusion is less surprising in the light of our argument that governments have been concentrating on the wrong indicators for too long. If you have the wrong map, you are unlikely to reach your destination.”²³

This calculation rates economic powerhouses like the US, Canada and Russia lower while small island nations fare best, suggesting that money doesn’t make you happier or make a better relationship between resource use and long, happy life.²⁴

Culturally-specific Evaluation

Although they share some values and often collaborate, environmentalists and other allies are not identical to Indigenous

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

people in their worldviews, values, social protocols, or goals. Nor are their futures inextricably linked to project outcomes. Fortunately, the stakeholders themselves, the Indigenous communities, are as capable of expressing their own values and evaluating their own projects as anyone. According to Tebtebba, an Indigenous organization based in the Philippines, the Dayak people of Indonesia have articulated their own criteria for community projects — Sustainability, Collectivity, Naturality, Spirituality, Process, Subsistence (domesticity) versus commerciality, Customary law versus global — and Tebtebba notes that “Failure to achieve these ideals is believed to result in *barau* ... a situation when nature fails to function normally, and thus results in chaos. *Barau* is a result of *Adat* transgression, a broken relationship with nature. ‘Poverty’ for the Dayak is linked directly with failure to exercise the *Adat* that governs the way in which the people should live.”²⁵

In Bhutan, after many centuries of voluntary isolation, government briefly pursued modernization and capitalist standards of progress and success. They found that, as Buddhists, this was not for them. At the 1998 Millennium Meeting for Asia and the Pacific in Seoul, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Royal Government of Bhutan explained his country’s philosophy of development and cautioned that although the standard of “Gross National Happiness” might seem idealistic, in fact his country was putting their King’s vision into practice and policy.

“The academic community has not developed the tools we need to look at happiness, one of our primary human values. This has led to a paradoxical situation: the primary goal of development is happiness, but the subject of this very goal eludes our analysis because it has been regarded as subjective... Much is known about income disparities but nothing about the happiness gap either between social groups or between nations...”²⁶

Certainly Indigenous people in the Americas live their worldviews as profoundly as the Dayak, the people of Bhutan or anyone else in the world, and alternatives specifically designed by and for Indigenous communities to reflect their values are not only possible, they are already on the table in international forums,

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

contesting the universality of generalized evaluations that exclude their goals and evaluations. Based on recommendations from the third and fourth sessions, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues held the Technical Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Indicators of Well-Being in Ottawa²⁷, where discussants – including outspoken representatives from all over the Americas - noted that “dominant paradigm listening” and research methods often did not reflect Indigenous perceptions, and the misinterpretations allowed for a lack of research integrity. Certainly it will take considerable work to align culturally-specific Indigenous priorities for evaluation of well-being - such as traditional knowledge, self-government, and community/eco-system health - with broad Millennium Development Goals and nation-state priorities for data gathering. However, the discussants created a set of core and sub-themes and important indicators of Indigenous well-being.²⁸

Core Theme	Sub-Theme(s)	Examples of Indicators
Identity, Land and Ways of Living	Use and intergenerational transmission of indigenous languages Support of, and access to, bilingual, mother tongue, and culturally appropriate education	Percent of indigenous peoples’ who recognize their indigenous language as their mother tongue Percent of fluent indigenous language speakers in indigenous communities Percent of children learning indigenous languages Number of programs to transmit/learn indigenous languages/culture Use of indigenous languages in state documents Use of indigenous languages in the media

Sample set of indicators from the Report Of The Meeting On Indigenous Peoples And Indicators Of Well-Being, Ottawa, 22-23 March 2006

It is interesting to note that these indicators do not seem to distinguish between individual well-being and the collective well-being of a community, people or nation. Some of these indicators can be transformed into project objectives that will

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

lead to improvements in the areas listed here as sub-themes and strengthen the pursuit of their core goals. In the example above, increasing the number of fluent speakers would address the goal of maintaining transmission of cultural knowledge. On another core theme, reducing environmental protection violations and conservation damage within and near indigenous lands and territories can improve the overall health of the environment and by extension the community.

It is important to note that the criteria expressed in this report can be traced to roots in Indigenous values and worldviews. Worldview refers to collectively developed ways of understanding, guiding and valuing and can be loosely defined as an understanding of how the world does and should function, why things work as they do, and the role of humans in this world. Worldview affects our socialization, expectations, protocols, and assessment of what is a healthy and satisfactory life. Important elements of worldview are the foundation of many community projects, for example, in the instances of distributive justice or reciprocity defining integrated food programs, in Menominee logging when their relationship with their place tells them that the forest will sustain them indefinitely as long as they sustain the forest, or in the Pojoaque Pueblo's cultural and educational center which began from the prophecy that told them the little ones would lead them out of difficult times.²⁹ Concepts of time, relationship to place, and interrelationship among all living things are all pieces of worldview that shape goals, methods, knowledge and protocols used to pursue improvements in well-being.

Conclusion

If projects measured by criteria that ignore Indigenous values have failed to resolve major social concerns, then revising evaluations to incorporate these values may very well produce results that are more and more adequately complex and satisfying to the Indigenous communities that practice them. Such revisions are already being applied with notable impact. These are based on the particular values of their designers, their sense of what is good and right, whether that worldview belongs to Buddhists, environmentalists, or Indigenous people of the Americas. Since

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

evaluation criteria, goals and research design are all intertwined, it seems that simply allowing Indigenous people to be subjects, informants or participants limits the depth and usefulness of our work as researchers. As academics we can simply fulfill academic needs and expectations, comfortably analyzing from outside according to the criteria that suits our own ideas. Continuing along that path will mean we will eventually have to measure the effects of studies and projects that conflict with Indigenous peoples' worldviews. Or we can incorporate tailor-made, culturally-specific criteria as expressed by the groups of people that we work with to create assessments and analyses that contribute to work initiated and directed by communities themselves. My conclusion is that we can be more useful and give richer information if we design and direct research projects *with* Indigenous people and their goals, criteria, knowledge and methods, expanding the canons of our discipline a bit in pursuit of more relevant and rewarding results. In this way, perhaps the collaboration between academia and Indigenous communities can contribute to substantial improvements in well-being and contentment.

Notes

1 U.S. Census Bureau, American Indian- And Alaska Native-Owned Firms: 2002 Economic Census, *Survey Of Business Owners*, Company Statistics Series Issued June 2006

2 National Women's Business Council, Native American/Alaska Native Women And Entrepreneurship, 2006 [Http://Www.Nwbc.Gov/Researchpublications/Documents/Native Amer Factsheet 2006.Pdf](http://www.nwbc.gov/researchpublications/Documents/Native_Amer_Factsheet_2006.Pdf) Accessed 10/20/2006

3 Taylor, Jonathan B. And Kalt, Joseph P. American Indians On Reservations: A Databook Of Socioeconomic Change Between The 1990 And 2000 Censuses, 2005, The Harvard Project On American Indian Economic Development Malcolm Wiener Center For Social Policy John F. Kennedy School Of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Ma

4 U.S. Census Bureau, American Indian- And Alaska Native-Owned Firms: 2002 Economic Census, *Survey Of Business Owners*, Company Statistics Series Issued June 2006

5 Kalt and Taylor, American Indians on Reservations: A Databook of Socioeconomic Change Between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, 2005

Gould—Are We Happy Yet

6 US Census Statistics for American Indian and Alaska Native-Owned Firms by Kind of Business: 2002

7 National Aboriginal Environmental Development Board, Ottawa, ON <http://www.naedb-cndea.ca/epic/internet/innaedb-cndea.nsf/en/wc00030e.html> accessed 11/19/06

8 Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, *Honoring Nations: Tribal Governance Success Stories, 2000*

9 Small Business Administration: Native American Affairs, <Http://Www.Sba.Gov/Naa/Tribes>, Last Updated 2000, Accessed October 6, 2006

10 National Aboriginal Environmental Development Board, Ottawa, ON <http://www.naedb-cndea.ca/epic/internet/innaedb-cndea.nsf/en/wc00030e.html> accessed 11/19/06

11 "Editor's Report: Indian Country Responds." Indian Country Today, October 01, 2001, <<http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1822>> Accessed November 22, 2006.

12 Norrell, Brenda, "Living In The Aftermath Of Two Killer Storms", Indian Country Today, <<http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096413755>>, Accessed October 02, 2006.

13 Bregendahl, Corry And Flora. Cornelia, Native American Business Participation In E-Commerce: An Assessment Of Technical Assistance And Training Needs. 2002, North Central Regional Center For Rural Development, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

14 National Center For Health Statistics, Health, United States, 2005 With Chartbook On Trends In The Health Of Americans Hyattsville, Maryland: 2005

15 US Census, American Indian, Alaska Native Tables From The Statistical Abstract Of The United States: 2004-2005, <Http://Www.Census.Gov/Statab/Www/Sa04aian.Pdf>, Accessed 10/20/2006

16 FIMI (International Indigenous Women's Forum) Report Release "*Mairin Iwanka Raya, Indigenous Women Stand Against Violence*" United Nations Permanent Forum On Indigenous Issues (Unpfii), October 17th, 2006

17 National Aboriginal Environmental Development Board, Response to the Canada Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Economic Opportunities Sectoral Follow-up Session Facilitators' Report Held in Ottawa on December 13 and 14, 2004

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

18 Amnesty International, Canada. "Stolen Sisters - A human rights response to discrimination and violence against Indigenous women in Canada", 4 October 2004 <http://www.amnesty.ca/resource_centre/reports/view.php?load=arcview&article=1895&c=Resource+Centre+Reports>, Accessed May, 2007.

19 Amnesty International, Canada. "Stolen Sisters - A human rights response to discrimination and violence against Indigenous women in Canada", 4 October 2004 <http://www.amnesty.ca/resource_centre/reports/view.php?load=arcview&article=1895&c=Resource+Centre+Reports>, Accessed May, 2007.

20 Comisión Nacional Para El Desarrollo De Los Pueblos Indígenas, "Indicadores socioeconómicos de los pueblos indígenas " Mexico City, http://cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=91, accessed 12/10/06

21 Hall, Gillette And Patrinos, Harry Anthony Indigenous Peoples, Poverty And Human Development In Latin America: 1994-2004

22 "Health Of The Indigenous Population In The Americas", Presented To The 138th Session Of The Executive Committee In Washington, D.C., In June 2006

23 The New Economics Foundation <Http://Www.Happyplanetindex.Org/Reveals.Htm> 2006 Visited 9/2/06

24 Ibid

25 Cariño, Joy, Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights And Poverty, Indigenous Perspectives, Volume 7, Number 1, April 2005, Tebtebba Foundation, Phillipines

26 Thinley, Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Values and Development: "Gross National Happiness" Text of the Keynote Speech Delivered at the Millennium Meeting for Asia and the Pacific, 30 October ~ 1 November 1998 Seoul, Republic of Korea His Excellency Chairman of the Council of Ministers Royal Government of Bhutan

27 Report Of The Meeting On Indigenous Peoples And Indicators Of Well-Being, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, E/C.19/2006/CRP.3 Ottawa, 22-23 March 2006

28 Report Of The Meeting On Indigenous Peoples And Indicators Of Well-Being, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, E/C.19/2006/CRP.3 Ottawa, 22-23 March 2006

29 Guyette, Susan *Planning for Balanced Development: A Guide for Native American and Rural Communities* Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 1996

BOOK REVIEWS

***The Vietnamese-American 1.5 Generation*. Ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2006), 323 pp., \$24.95 paper.**

The Vietnamese-American 1.5 Generation is divided into two parts. Part I offers an overview of Vietnamese history, focusing on Vietnam under French colonial rule, the First Indochina War, American involvement in Vietnam, the Fall of Saigon and its aftermath, and refugee exoduses. Part II comprises narratives written by Vietnamese-American students enrolled at the University of California system.

In order to understand why almost two millions Vietnamese and Chinese-Vietnamese fled Vietnam after the Communists gained victory over the Saigon regime and U.S. troops on April 30, 1975, Sucheng Chan discusses the complexity of Vietnamese history. While the history of Vietnam and the Vietnam War can be found in several history books, the plight of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam and their life experience under the Vietnamese government, either before or after 1975, are often ignored. However, Chan addresses these issues in her book, giving a broader perspective about the conflict between the Chinese and the Vietnamese.

The focus of the book lies in Part II, in which Chan presents fifteen narratives written by Vietnamese-American and Chinese-Vietnamese-American students of the University of California. These anonymous narratives are diverse in genres: essay, diary, family history, memoir, biography, and autobiography. All of the selected narratives were written by students, however their voices do not represent broad voice of the Vietnamese-American community.

Chan names Part II of her book "Stories of War, Revolution, Flight, and New Beginnings." Common themes of this section include social and political turbulence of Vietnam right before April 30, 1975, corrupted bureaucracy, "boat-people" and refugee-camp experience, evacuation by sea or by air with American troops, Communist oppression and hostility, and post-war reeducation camps. Like the majority of other immigrants and refugees residing

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

in the United States, the Vietnamese also encountered language barriers, cultural and traditional differences, contradictory family values, homesickness, nostalgia, American individualism, alienation, and racial discrimination. As the first Vietnamese-American generation, the writers of these narratives discuss how their parents and grandparents expected them to maintain and preserve Vietnamese culture at home but at the same time adjust themselves to American culture and lifestyle in public. The writers have to debate whether they should be Vietnamese, Chinese, American, Vietnamese-American, or even Chinese-Vietnamese-American. Vietnamese culture emphasizes filial piety and obedience; thus, these writers have to strive much harder to please their parents and bring honor to their families. In America, they have to prove that they are competent, ambitious, and successful so that they will be respected in America.

Conflict is another significant aspect throughout these narratives. Some writers express vehement disagreement toward Vietnamese heritage and prefer American individualism and consumerism. Also, those whose parents supported the Saigon regime and the United States during the war, on the one hand, hate the Vietnamese Communist government, but on the other hand, desire to return to Vietnam to help the country. It should be noted that Chan's book would not be allowed for the reading public in Vietnam because it reflects Communist barbarity and cruelty, and all the narratives condemn the Vietnamese government for its corruption, inhumanity, and discrimination. These essays would be considered "reactionary" and "anti-Communist" according to literary tenets established by the Vietnamese government. The price that these writers and their families had to pay for freedom America cannot be compensated for because of the immense loss and deprivation that define who they were and who they are now. Chan's book is important, despite its lack of other representative Vietnamese-American voices, because it is about true life stories and humanity.

Mark Christian Thompson, *Black Fascisms: African American Literature and Culture Between the Wars*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007). X, 232 pp., \$19.50 paper.

In *How Bigger Was Born*, Richard Wright described the political choice available to young black men like Bigger Thomas as being between communism and fascism. A plethora of recent scholarship from critics like Barbara Foley, James Smethurst, and William Maxwell has articulated the complex relationship between black and red in the first half of the twentieth century. Mark Christian Thompson's *Black Fascisms* begins to explore the other half of Wright's binary, tracing the uses of fascist ideology in the work of Marcus Garvey, George S. Schuyler, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, and Richard Wright.

Thompson consciously distances his subject from twentieth-century European fascism, arguing for the fascist leanings of black writers, as "a positive form of black political engagement" (21), a negation of Marxism within, rather than outside, the black radical tradition. The value of this approach is that we come to understand fascist tendencies as an organic feature of the evolution of blackness within Western racialized capitalism. Like Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism*, Thompson takes a long view of black political development, which allows him to understand fascist tendencies in mid-century African American literature and culture as more than just a response to events in Germany and Italy. Taken together, *Black Marxism* and *Black Fascisms* provide a bracing corrective to the Cold War orthodoxy that describes African American politics as the struggle between liberal integration and conservative separatism.

Thompson helps to re-orient our understanding of the Harlem Renaissance and African American writing in the 1930s by putting Marcus Garvey (who proclaimed, "We were the first fascists") and what Tony Martin calls "Literary Garveyism" at the center of his study. Despite his tremendous popularity with African Americans, Garvey has usually been relegated to the margins of African American cultural history. Reading canonical African American literary figures through the lens of Garvey's notion of

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

black liberation helps to complicate those figures and make sense of aspects of their work that have been difficult to assimilate to traditional critical paradigms. The readings of McKay's *Harlem: Negro Metropolis*, Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, and Wright's *The Outsider* all not only advance Thompson's thesis they also enhance our understanding of those authors.

Black Fascisms also expands the geo-political context of African American literature between the wars. The influence of the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia on Garveyism and Hurston's idealization of Haiti in *Tell My Horse* push the analysis of black fascism into the black diaspora and help to create a broader black understanding of McKay's engagement with the Soviet Union and Wright's fascination with French existentialism.

The book's one weak spot is its conclusion, which jumps ahead to the 1960s and the Black Arts Movement. The discussion of Amiri Baraka fails to take the full trajectory of Baraka's career into account and Thompson's treatment of anti-Semitism doesn't rise above truncated after-thought.

Black Fascisms is an important contribution to our understanding of African American politics, culture, and literature in the first half of the twentieth century.

Thompson III, J. Phillip, *Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Xii, 338 pp., \$29.95 hardcover.

In *Double Trouble*, Thompson wrestles with the conflict of the viability of Black elected officials successfully leading major U.S. cities and remaining accountable to the "Black poor." Thompson asserts the strategy of deep pluralism... "how marginal groups are to achieve power in competitive struggles with other groups while still striving for a politics of common good."¹ The work provides a wealth of knowledge concerning inner city politics since the

1 Thompson, 2006: 27.

Reviews

civil rights movement and deftly outlines the problems, such as white flight, federal dispersion of funds, and the depoliticizing of grassroots organizing, that have developed for Black mayors and working class communities. *Double Trouble*, however, raises essential questions which are never adequately addressed by the author.

The first question is that of focus, Thompson never provides an in depth analysis of the Black poor upon which he can successfully found his deep pluralism. His analysis is limited to an assumed economic behavior derived from a significant amount of traditional economic and political behavioral studies. The problem with this methodology is that such studies unnecessarily narrow the Black poor by inadequately dealing with the complexity of the population especially in relation to the historic movements of a system often perceived as dangerous, racist and immoral. Thompson's analysis would benefit immensely from dealing with major questions of Black working class radicalism as outlined in works such as Robin Kelley's *Race Rebels* and *Freedom Dreams*.

The second problem of note is Thompson's lack of commentary concerning the class consciousness of Black mayors. If class is an essential variable in urban politics, as Thompson asserts, then *Double Trouble* should include an analysis of Black mayors as a class. Traditional political science analyses of Black political actors are insufficient. Because Thompson himself has chosen to work outside the traditional analyses of political science with his concept of deep pluralism, addressing the possibility that alliances between Black mayors and Black poor populations lie outside the class interests of Black mayors remains fundamental.

Finally, Thompson's analysis gradually becomes lost between the two aims of the work—to promote working class Black politics and to find a place for Black mayors within the advancement of Black working class politics within the urban context. To achieve this end looking at Black mayors as individual political actors proves counterproductive, especially if the primary motive behind Black mayors developing their ability to use institutional power to help the black poor develop active and stable political organizations lies in the eventual use of these organizations as vehicles to election

Ethnic Studies Review Volume 31

and reelection. Unlike Thompson I can see Black mayors in the present urban context fulfilling such leadership roles only when the need to assist the Black poor develop is counterbalanced by the mayors' needs to insure the existence of a significant Black poor population. In other words I don't believe that Black mayors would knowingly assist a population beyond its economic problems when they depend upon the existence of that very population *within its class context*. This is the dilemma of deep pluralism that Thompson's work cannot reconcile.

Kelley, Robin. (1994). *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics & the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press.

Kelley, Robin (2002). *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Jim Zwick. *Inuit Entertainers in the United States*. (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity, 2006). xi, 205 pp., \$18.95 paper.

The stories documented in this book about Inuit entertainers in the United States reveals important events and circumstances pertaining to the lived experiences of Esther Eneutseak and her daughter Columbia, "the only Eskimo born in the United States," during a time period (1890s-1920s) when the indigenous peoples to North America participated in world fairs and expositions as living exhibits. Were these indigenous people as cultural performers in control of their own lives? Did they possess the power and authority to make their own decisions on their own terms? In an attempt to answer these questions, the author, Jim Zwick, makes use of primary sources, newspapers, magazines, ship manifests, and census records to piece together the lives of these two Inuit women who, according to him, were more than objects of curiosity to the people that viewed them and saw their performances. Rather, he asserts that they, as well as Inuit entertainers in general, possessed "various levels of control" and "were neither passive

Reviews

nor powerless” despite the fact that they experienced “some of the worst conditions faced by performers in ethnic villages at world’s fairs and expositions” (pp. 4-5).

Esther Eneusteak was one of many individuals from twelve Inuit families recruited from her homeland in Labrador to participate in the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago during 1893, which included living exhibit outside of the Anthropology/Ethnology buildings. The *Esquimaux village* was curated by Franz Boas, who placed an extreme emphasis on their traditional Inuit cultural authenticity untouched by Western civilization and that they were truly a “primitive” people. The Inuit faced a number of hardships while residing in the Esquimaux village, which included poor heating, improper ventilation, inadequate food, even a measles epidemic. Those in charge of the living exhibit still required that the Inuit continue to wear their heavy fur clothing when temperatures went into the 70s in March. Because many of the Inuit refused to wear their furs and successfully challenged this requirement, this incident seems to serve as the foundation for how Inuit performers “were neither passive or powerless.” Yet, according to Zwick most of the Inuit “families returned home after experiencing hardships, tragedy and dislocation, stranded in an unfamiliar country with few prospects of finding stable employment” (pp. 38). Esther Eneusteak opted to stay in the U.S., and her parents Abile and Helen, returned to Labrador with her daughter Columbia in 1896.

Esther Eneusteak found limited employment doing work as an interpreter and working as a maid and translator at the Museum of Natural History in New York between 1896 and 1899. During this time, she becomes connected to the tragic lives of Zaksriner and Artmarhoke, “The Eskimo Twins.” Brought to the U.S. from their homeland in Alaska by Miner Bruce, whose career was fueled by the trade of furs and the sale of Inuit artifacts to museums. While Zwick is aware uncertainties surrounding guardianship due conflicts in various published accounts, he relies on “what is probably the most reliable account of their adoption from Bruce’s perspective” published in 1896 (pp.41-42). Was Bruce’s story of adoption true? The problem here is that we do not really know.

While the book sheds light on the lives of Inuit entertainers as

cultural performers possessing some degree of agency in terms of choices and actions from the 1880s and 1920s, what is missing from the narrative to highlight and support this assumption are the actual Inuit voices – their thoughts, impressions, and ideas concerning how they viewed their actions and decisions. Although Zwick manages to piece together a history and series of stories culled from articles that appeared in newspapers and magazines, or were written into pamphlets and postcards created for exhibits and other venues like the “dime store museums,” narrative falls short of his objective. In the end, what we do have is a solid narrative regarding a series of events that can be discussed, even surmised, through Zwick’s research that put all of these sources into a single format.

Edward Charles Valandra. *Not without Our Consent: Lakota Resistance to Termination, 1950-59*. Foreword by Vine Deloria, Jr. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006). xxiii, 287 pp., \$35 cloth.

Although South Dakota is the home territory of many Lakota, Dakota and Nakota nations, it has often been a dangerous place to be an Indian, especially in the western half of the state, where most of the tribal lands lie. Ranchers, miners and others have a long history of trying to lay claim to those lands, using, alternately, quasi-legal and violent means.

In this very-well-researched work, Professor Valandra shows that: 1) In the mid-1950s, South Dakota legislators, in collusion with white US Congressmen and white ranchers, used and abused federal laws to take control and/or ownership of tribal lands, masking their actions whenever possible with righteous rhetoric; and 2) Lakota leaders proved capable and courageous in response, taking the risky path of initiating a statewide election in a mostly anti-Indian climate on the issue of whether the state should assume jurisdiction over tribal lands.

The first chapters of the book set the stage by discussing the

Reviews

continuing effects – on Lakota people and on tribal land holdings and economies in South Dakota – of Congress’ breaking up and selling tribal lands, terminating tribes, and allowing states to assume jurisdiction over tribal reservations. Valandra uses primary sources to prove that the criteria put forward in Congress as rationales for their actions had nothing to do with real life and everything to do with racist views of Indians as not worthy of owning possibly valuable lands that white ranchers could be using to profit themselves.

The racist nature of various Acts and policies of the Termination Era in the 1950s and 1960s were masked in honorable terms, such as Utah Senator Arthur Watkins’ pronouncement that, as a result of termination, “THESE PEOPLE SHALL BE FREE!” (21) On the other hand, many actions and justifications were obviously, and often quite blatantly and unashamedly, racist, as South Dakota’s elected state and federal legislators demonstrated.

Valandra tells the story of Lakota resistance to the South Dakota legislature’s attempts to assume jurisdiction over their reservations. Despite the fact that South Dakota was one of the most overtly racist states in the US, the tribes pushed ahead and convinced the majority of state voters that it would be against their interests to govern the tribes.

As an Oglala born and raised on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, I am familiar with the general history of land theft, treaty abrogation, allotment, forced leases and forced fee patents. However, Professor Valandra’s research is fresh, including little-used government documents, the papers of a former South Dakota senator and governor, and the papers of former Rosebud Tribal Council members.

I look forward with anticipation to the continuation of this research, that is, a discussion of the victorious Lakota campaign against a followup attempt by South Dakota in 1964 to wrest jurisdiction from the tribes, in spite of the successful tribal-led referendum only seven years earlier.

The book includes a chronology of pertinent events in law and history from 1830 to 1966; the texts of relevant state senate and house bills is included.

ETHNIC STUDIES REVIEW

Journal Information

Guidelines for Submitting Manuscripts

Authors must be members of NAES when submitting their work. ESR uses a policy of blind peer review. All manuscripts are read by at least two reviewers who are experts in the area. Manuscripts must not have been published previously or be under consideration by other publications. ESR seeks manuscripts of 7500 words or less, including notes and works cited. Notes and references should be kept to a minimum. Manuscripts must be double spaced, using ten characters per inch. Include with each submission a separate title page which provides the following information: manuscript title; full names of author(s); professional title(s); full address; telephone; FAX; and email. Manuscripts must be submitted with four hard copies and a 3.5" Windows compatible diskette in Microsoft Word or Rich Text format, along with a 100 word abstract and a 50 word biographical statement about the author(s). Manuscripts must conform to the Chicago Style Manual. Authors who want a manuscript returned should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Manuscripts should be sent to the Editor, Otis L. Scott, Dean, College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, California State University, Sacramento, Amador Hall 255, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819. Telephone: 916.278.6755; email: scottol@csus.edu.

Books for Review

Books and inquiries regarding reviews should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Annette Reed, Director, Native American Studies Program, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819 or areed@csus.edu

Other Correspondence

Correspondence that is editorial, concerning subscriptions or news for our newsletter should be sent to the NAES National Office, Western Washington University, 516 High Street – MS 9113, Bellingham, WA 98225-9113. Telephone: 360-650-2349, Fax: 360-650-2690, E-mail: NAES@wwu.edu, www.ethnicstudies.org.

Subscriptions

Membership in the NAES includes ESR and The Ethnic Reporter newsletter, published in the Fall and Spring. Annual membership dues are based on the following income chart: Up to \$24,000: \$35, \$24,001 - \$36,000: \$45, \$36,001 - \$48,000: \$55, \$48,001 - \$60,000: \$65, \$60,001 - \$80,000: \$75, \$80,001 and above: \$85, Institution/Library: \$65, Patron: \$150, Life Membership: \$500, Associate Members (students/retirees): Above scale up to maximum of \$40.

Back Titles

Inquiries should be sent to the National Office.

Advertising and Permission

Inquires should be sent to the National Office.

NAES PATRONS

**American Cultural Studies
Western Washington University**

**College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies
California State University, Sacramento**