traditional values of her culture to resolve the most elemental problems in order to survive.

Among others, the story of Lucy, the young woman who is spending the last days of her life in Welfare Island in a hospital for people who suffer from tuberculosis, is a very sad and moving account of her daily routine waiting for her lover, Eddie. After she became ill and could no longer be of use to him, she was abandoned. She knew that her final days were fast approaching and wanted to see him for the last time, but he never came.

We sympathize with the decision of Inez, the young orphan lady, who married an older man in order to leave the house of her domineering aunt who was very cruel to her. Her situation became worse because her husband, a very jealous and insecure man, did not keep the promise that he made to her before the marriage, to allow her to pursue a career as a graphic artist. But Inez was determined to reach her goal in life. After overcoming all kinds of obstacles, she became a prominent graphic artist.

Zoraida is the young mother and wife who is accused by her husband of lascivious behavior while she was sleeping. She was not aware of what was happening while she was asleep. On recommendation of her parents, a spiritualist is brought to the house hoping to find a solution to the problem, but unfortunately, the spiritualist could not find a solution and the situation deteriorated. Zoraida tried desperately to be a good mother and good wife but was aware that there were things that were beyond her control.

Rituals of Survival portrays six women at very important and decisive moments of their lives, when vital decisions that affected their futures were made. We see the mental processes and reactions to everyday life situations. Mohr in a very subtle way opens the door to women's thoughts on depression, deviant behavior, all kinds of inhibitions and other important matters, in many cases subjects that women never talk about. “These are women who don’t just survive,” Mohr said. “They survive with great nobility. And they manage to make a world for themselves, a world for their children.”

—Luis L. Pinto
Bronx Community College of CUNY


In virtually every U.S. city, residents are aware of ethnic divisions among the residential sections of the urban area. Demarcation of zones may be clear or nebulous, but it is present despite decades of “melting pot” rhetoric from opinion leaders. In this collection of articles edited by Jamshid A. Momeni of Howard University, contributors examine the
relationship between ethnicity and the location and quality of housing in the United States.

The approach is that of the social sciences. Most of the authors are sociologists, and the focus is on analysis of data that reveal the characteristics of housing occupied by members of minority groups. Five of the eleven articles examine the housing situation of multiple ethnic groups; others focus on single groups: blacks, Hispanics, Indians, and Asians.

Certain findings recur as various authors analyze the data relevant to their topics: Americans reside in ethnic isolation from one another, members of ethnic minorities generally reside in less desirable housing than non-Hispanic whites, and little positive change has occurred in the housing situation of the nation's ethnic minorities in recent years. Evidence indicates that the principal problem is one of minority access to more desirable housing. Habits of segregation limit the choice of places where a minority group member may live. Correlation techniques reveal only modest association between housing cost and degree of segregation.

In a free market for housing, buyers and sellers (or renters and landlords) would reach agreements based primarily on economic considerations, and minority group members would be expected to reside wherever their economic conditions permitted. In the actual housing market, in which limitations are placed by noneconomic forces on housing access, analysts find that members of minority groups generally pay more than non-Hispanic whites for equivalent housing. Limitations on access, coupled with limitations on financial resources, translate into inferior housing for most minority group members, as revealed by statistics on overcrowding and lack of complete facilities.

Although two of the eleven chapters focus on federal housing policy, rigorous analysis of that policy is absent. John M. Goering ("Minority Housing Needs and Civil Rights Enforcement") demonstrates convincingly the persistence of minority concentration in less desirable housing despite the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Clearly government has made no more than token efforts to enforce the statutory commitment to a free market in housing. A chapter on the politics of fair housing enforcement would have been helpful.

Despite shortcomings, which include reliance on data that are growing old as an increasing number of years separate the present from the 1980 census, readers will find this volume useful. Writing is consistently clear. The authors assume little methodological sophistication on the part of readers and offer clear explanations of the results of statistical analyses. References and a selected bibliography offer access to the wider literature of minority housing studies.

This volume is more useful as introduction than as pathbreaking analysis. In that respect it is successful.

—Vagn K. Hansen
High Point College

Explorations in Sights and Sounds No. 7 (Summer 1987)