

publishers into utilizing folklore “buffoonery” in their novels. This created a situation in which the writer’s challenge became to satisfy these external audiences without sacrificing either dignity or artistic merit. (It is interesting to note that there were similar pressures on African American musicians to conform to white stereotypes.) A major shift appears to have occurred in the nineteen-thirties or forties. From the nineteen-forties onward, folk materials were used more sparingly. Rather than “incorporate all the characteristics of a given folk hero” into their novels, authors began instead to use bits and pieces of folk material as “catalysts” for the works they were creating. As Thomas puts it, folklore became “absorbed into realism.” Or, in some cases, into symbolism and/or politics.

This is a fascinating book, providing insight into the complex relationships between African American folklore ritual and literature. It is recommended highly.

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Richard H. Thompson. *Theories of Ethnicity: A Critical Appraisal*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989) 206 pp., \$45.00.

This work is a systematic attempt to identify certain major theories that govern our discourse and analyses of issues pertaining to ethnicity and race. Sociobiology, primordialism, assimilationism, world-system theory and neo-Marxism are among the theories included.

In examining each of these, Thompson provides what he called an “internalist critique.” That is, he sought to criticize each of the theories internally on its own grounds. He made it clear that his aim was not to engage in any critical analysis by appealing to some external standard that may be established by comparing one theory with another.

In the epilogue, Thompson offers his own theory of race and ethnicity by reacting to the world-system theory, of which Sidney Wilhelm is representative. Wilhelm enlarged Marxism in ways to account for race, ethnicity and racism. In keeping with the views of Wilhelm and certain other neo-Marxists, Thompson argues for the primacy of economic factors, especially those that pertain to modes of production. He maintains that the modes of production, seen within the world economy, must be regarded as the primary frameworks for analysis of race and ethnicity. That is, that it must be made clear that the economic factors determine the nature and dynamics of ethnic and race relations. In a word, that capitalism thrives on maintaining racial and ethnic tensions among the various groups of the world. In the U.S. and in South Africa, for example,

such tensions are manifest along the color line.

Thompson did an outstanding job of bringing to the fore the various theories of race and ethnicity. A shortcoming of the book is that when Thompson introduced his own theory of ethnicity in Chapter six and in the Epilogue, he seemed to be providing not so much a theory of ethnicity or race as focusing on racism. An analysis of racism is one thing; a theory of ethnicity is another.

Additionally, when Thompson expounded his theory of ethnicity and of racism, he relied on a number of illustrations derived from the African American experience of inequality. Yet, Thompson made no effort to provide the reader with views of ethnicity or race offered by any of the African American theorists themselves, save a brief allusion to Marcus Garvey. It would have been instructive had Thompson considered the views of individuals such as W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington or Alain Locke. The latter, no less than W.E.B. DuBois, had much to say about ethnicity and race.

Thompson is not clear as to which ethnic groups are to be included under his rubric of "ethnicity." Should his theories of ethnicity include the Italians, Irish, Germans, and other people of European origins? Should his theories include the ethnic groups in Soviet Russia, China, or Africa? What warrants Thompson devoting so much attention to the situation of African Americans, without adequately presenting their own theories of ethnicity?

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Sophie Trupin. *Dakota Diaspora: Memoirs of a Jewish Homesteader*. A Bison Book. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988) vii, 160 pp., \$6.95 paper.

Dakota Diaspora was originally published in 1984 by the Alternative Press in Berkeley and quickly went out of print. The University of Nebraska Press is to be congratulated for putting the volume back into circulation.

This book is a true gem. While Sophie Trupin may not exhibit all the literary prowess of professional writers such as O.E. Rolvaag, Willa Cather, and Mari Sandoz, her book about people who settled the Great Plains can be read with great profit along with *Giants in the Earth*, *O Pioneers!*, and *Old Jules*. Trupin's story deals with Jewish homesteaders, who, admittedly, were a distinct minority among the various ethnic Europeans who took up residence in rural America. Historically, the majority of Jewish immigrants established themselves in urban centers