

Beyond Ethnicity: Toward a Critique of the Hegemonic Discipline

**E. San Juan, Jr.
Bowling Green State University**

With the current vogue of multiculturalism and cultural diversity requirements as panacea for systemic problems, scholars and teachers of Ethnic Studies need to reassess the principles and goals of their discipline. Los Angeles 1992, among other developments, has exposed the serious inadequacies of old paradigms. A review of the racialized history of Asians in U.S. society, a narrative of oppression and opposition now mystified by the *model minority myth*, allows us to grasp the flaws of the liberal pluralist focus on culture divorced from the political and economic contexts of unequal power relations. Ultimately, for whom is Ethnic Studies designed? By historicizing identity politics and validating the genealogy of resistance, we in the field of Ethnic Studies can refuse to be mere apologists for the status quo and revitalize the critical and emancipatory thrust of Ethnic Studies, a thrust inseparable from the struggle of people of color against white supremacy.

In a recent opinion piece in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Evelyn Hu-DeHart reflected on the paradoxical situation of Ethnic Studies as an academic discipline--paradoxical because it is both widely endorsed and universally ignored, long-established but marginalized.¹ Why this co-existence of being both blessed and maligned at the same time? All Departments of Ethnic Studies, to be sure, have experienced the anxieties of in-betweenness and contingency, "trips" of indeterminacy. Their survival is nothing short of a miracle. Except that this miracle, seen in historical perspective, involves secular agents: the ordinary and daily acts of resistance by people of color against ostracism and various forms of oppression. I have in mind the mobilization of popular energies against discrimination and racist violence throughout United States history--a

dialectic of forces that have constituted the polity from its founding. The birth of Ethnic Studies in the fury of emergencies, in the fires of urban rebellions and national liberation struggles inscribed within living memory, has marked its character and destiny for better or worse, perhaps to a degree that explains the risks and the stakes in this peculiar (to use Wittgenstein's term) "form of life."

We are witnessing today a fateful turn of events in the politics of local/global cultures as we cross the threshold into the 21st century. While its viability and provocativeness still draws sustenance from the profound historicity of its advent, the current plight of Ethnic Studies also depends on the conjuncture of circumstances. It depends chiefly on the sense of responsibility of such "organic" intellectuals to their communities. Everyone recognizes that this discipline would not have been possible without the radical democratic engagements of women, youth, people of color in "internal colonies" and overseas dependencies--projects to achieve cultural autonomy, sovereignty rights, and self-determination. One might say that our field is concerned with the theorizing of such variegated praxis.²

With the neoconservative counter-revolution of the eighties, such condition of possibility may have been extinguished, hence the ambivalent and even amphibious mapping of this field. Hu-DeHart is sorely pressed to argue for its scholarly legitimacy and respectability, thus she tries to reinvent its reformist "contract" with society by invoking the somewhat triumphalist claim that Ethnic Studies is here to stay because "it is an integral part of multicultural education." I do not mean to ascribe a naive optimism to Hu-DeHart; her view is partly substantiated by demographics and the revitalized opposition to the neoconservatism of the last two decades. Ethnic Studies will stay so long as its practitioners adhere chiefly to the power/knowledge regime of the "role model" and regard this subject-position as the pedagogical transcoding of the chameleonic politics of identity (otherwise variably known as "border," hybrid, and cyborg lifestyles). The routine slogan for these role models, I believe, goes like this: "Look, marvel at our inimitable crafts, performances, apparel, idioms--we contribute to making America a colorful saladbowl of differences!" Angela Davis rightly objects to this cooptative management of diversity for corporate profitmaking, incapable of challenging the gender, class and race hierarchies that structure the major institutions: "A multiculturalism that does not acknowledge the political character of culture will not...lead toward the dismantling of racist, sexist, homophobic, economically exploitative institutions."³

Meanwhile, I want to provoke here an exploratory reflection on these themes of telos and commitment in this time of cynical reaction and retrenchment by posing the following questions: If multicultural education (for some, the "cult of literacy") has displaced the centrality of mass social movements, does this signify that we have again been subtly re-

colonized? Has the "power elite" (to use C. Wright Mills' oldfashioned term) succeeded in obscuring fundamental inequalities (class, gender, nation) by shifting the attention to cultural differences, lifestyles, and the quest for authentic selves? Has ethnic pluralism erased racism? Is the generic brand of Ethnic Studies and its discourse of diversity, with its associated politics of identity, not problematizing Others of its own invention? Is it now simply used to manage and harmonize differences by refurbishing the trope of the "melting pot"? Has it been retooled to perform what Marcuse once called "repressive desublimation"? Or is it deployed as prophylaxis to service the aspirations of the comprador intelligentsia of the subalterns and ultimately pacify the populace?⁴

I want to briefly address these questions in the context of the Asian American situation in the period of late or global capitalism. As numerous scholars (Elizabeth Martinez and Annette Jaimes Guerrero,⁵ among others) have argued in examining the complex racial politics of U.S. history, we can no longer continue to use the white/black sociological paradigm to understand how the racialization of Latinos, Native Americans, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and other groups in this country has operated to establish, reproduce and maintain EuroAmerican hegemony. For one, the 1992 Los Angeles multiethnic rebellion, labelled "riots" by the mass media, escapes this functionalist paradigm.⁶ I propose the axiom of historical specificity and the methodological primacy of material social relations to guide us in apprehending how the value or meaning of ethnicity (ethnic identity, etc.) cannot be fully grasped without the overall framework of the political economy of race in U.S. history. Except for proponents of the "Bell Curve" and other reactionary theories, the term "race" has (by the consensus of the scholarly community) no scientific referent. It is a socially constructed term embedded in the structures of power and privilege in any social formation. Its signifying power comes from the articulation of a complex of cultural properties and processes with a mode of production centered on capital accumulation and its accompanying symbolic economy. This system depends primarily on material inequality in the appropriation and exploitation of land, labor power, and means of reproduction by a privileged minority of European origin or affiliation. The historical genealogy of the United States as a peculiar settler formation with internal colonies and subjugated subalterns is, I submit, the necessary framework within which one should chart the postCold War vicissitudes of late-capitalist *Herrenvolk* democracy.⁷

By the year 2000, ten million people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent will be residing here. This is part of a demographic trend in which the racial minorities (always conceived as a problem to the dominant majority) are bound to become the majority in the next four or five decades--a shocking and frightening prospect for a preponderant multitude of citizens who still cling to the assimilationist melting-pot of yore.

Globalizing trends, however, contain both homogenizing and heterogenizing impulses.

By 2020, Asians/Pacific Islanders will reach a total of twenty million.⁸ But chances are that even with this phenomenal increase, Asian Americans (the government rubric homogenizes more than 30 distinct groups) in general will still "look alike" to the majority. Such a will to classify "them" versus "us" is not of course a natural disposition but a crafted scapegoating response that has become normalized.⁹ It is the resentment felt by the casualties of economic devaluation and social dislocation: someone (who looks or behaves differently, the "strangers" in our midst) ought to pay for the crisis we are in. I cite only the most well-known example. In 1992, two unemployed white autoworkers in Detroit mistook Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, for Japanese and clubbed him to death. Chin's father was a World War II veteran, and his grandfather was one of the thousands of Chinese who built the transcontinental railroads in the 19th century.

About a hundred years ago, the first federal law targeting a racially denominated group, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (not repealed until 1943), was passed after years in which the Chinese served as sacrificial offerings--to lynch mobs.¹⁰ (Note that California passed the first law in 1858 barring Chinese and "Mongolians"). "Kill the foreigners to save our jobs! The Chinese must go!" were the demands of unions in California before and after 1882. Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, is famous for his statement: "Every incoming coolie means the displacement of an American, and the lowering of the American standard of living." What needs underscoring is something marginalized in the textbooks: Ever since the 1790 Naturalization Law, which specified that only free "white" immigrants would be eligible for naturalized citizenship, a racially exclusive and not simply ethnic pattern of development became ascendant.

Just as landmark cases like *Dred Scott vs Sanford* (1857) and *Plessy vs Ferguson* (1896) registered the ideological effects of racial struggles in the past, so we find analogous developments concerning Asians. This racially exclusivist drive to discipline Asian bodies, inflamed by economic crises and sharpening class antagonisms, influenced the laws reinforcing the 1882 Exclusion Act, the 1907-08 Gentlemen's Agreement, and finally the 1917 and 1924 legislation of the "barred zone," which prohibited the entry of all Asians, including those in the Asian part of Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia, and the Pacific and southeast Asian Islands not owned by the United States. The "barred zone" law is, I think, a unique milestone in the annals of territorial purification. Clearly, the state was neither neutral nor paternalistic in the racialization of Asians. I need not recapitulate here the narratives of brutalization of these Asian subjects all of which have been plotted by the discursive and disciplinary practices of an order geared to facilitate commodity exchange and sur-

plus-value accumulation. John Higham's *Strangers in the Land*¹¹ and Gustavus Myers' *History of Bigotry in the United States*,¹² among others, offer substantive documentation for this entire epoch.

Up to World War II, then, Asians here were perceived as "perpetual foreigners" because of their physiognomy and therefore had to "stay in their place." They were considered "unassimilable," recalcitrant, and intractable, because of either language, customs, religious or political beliefs--in short, their appalling victimage and their refusal to submit. Ethnicity acquired meaning and import within the existing class hierarchy and the vicissitudes of its internal antagonisms. The historian Sucheng Chan sums up the effects of state ideological and coercive apparatuses that circumscribed the location of Asians in the racialized order: "In their relationship to the host society, well-to-do merchants and poor servants, landowning farmers and propertyless farm workers, exploitative labor contractors and exploited laborers alike were considered inferior to all Euro-Americans, regardless of the internal ethnic and socio-economic divisions among the latter."¹³ When 112,000 Japanese Americans were "relocated" to concentration camps in 1942, this surveillance and confinement of bodies climaxed almost a century of racial politics initiated with the near extermination of the American Indian nations, refined in the slave plantations of the South, and extended after the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 to Mexicans and indigenous inhabitants of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines.

Various historians have pointed out that we cannot understand the economic and geopolitical expansion of the United States nation-state without constantly keeping in mind the physical displacement of masses labelled "Others", and the political subjugation of dark-skinned peoples by the civilization of white supremacy.¹⁴ The notion of cultural pluralism is rooted in and complicit with the permanence of systemic inequality. The Enlightenment principles of equality and individual rights constituted the abstract logic that legitimized the commodification of human bodies (chattel slavery) and the predatory forays of the "free market." Eventually, white supremacy and ethnocentrism acquired pseudo-scientific legitimacy with the rise of social Darwinism and the tradition of racist thinking begun by Carl Linnaeus and elaborated by Robert Knox, Arthur de Gobineau, Francis Galton (founder of eugenics), Herbert Spencer, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and their numerous American counterparts. When the majority of Asians entered U.S. territory after the Civil War and the pacification of the Native Americans in the West, they entered a space where their subjectivity was mediated if not produced by the interpellation of capital. The boundaries of domination over Asian and Hawaiian bodies exceeded the circumscribed geography of the nation-state when the U.S. annexed Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines as colonies by the turn of the century. The Cold War interventions in Korea in the fifties and Vietnam in the sixties and seventies explain the

influx of refugees, war brides, orphans, and the "brain drain" from those unsettled regions now targetted for global modernization by transnational corporations. (And mind you, these transnational entrepreneurs are not reading Max Weber's theory of modernization but Sun Tzu's *Art of War*¹⁵ and other guerilla manuals from medieval Japan.) Has the margin then become the center, or the center marginalized?

Distinct from other Asians, the Filipinos experienced the full impact of U.S. colonization as "wards" of the government's Bureau of Indian Affairs. The violent subjugation of the Philippines and its revolutionary republic after the brief Spanish-American War (at the cost of at least 8,000 U.S. soldiers and about a million natives--a blank space in most history textbooks) gives us the background to the heterogeneous and incoherent nature of the Filipino community here in the U.S. (now the largest of the Asian American category). When queried why the American conduct of the war had been cruel, Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana replied: "Senators must remember that we are not dealing with Americans or Europeans. We are dealing with Orientals...."¹⁶ Such an "Orientalist" remark has often been repeated from then on up and through World War II (against the Japanese), the Korean War, and the interventions in IndoChina.

It should now be obvious that the ethnicity of Asian Americans cannot be understood apart from history, the workings of the state, and the contingencies of political economy. We need to comprehend the effects of the racializing dynamics of business politics and the resonance of modernization ideology in the colonizing maneuvers of the government around the world. Because international rivalries of nation-states (despite postCold War compromises) affect ethnic/racial boundaries and their realignments in the United States, I would also urge a comparative approach in examining the racializing of ethnic relations across class and gender lines, among European immigrants and their descendants, as well as the dominated peoples of color, in relation to power disparities and conflicts.

We must remember that the incorporation of Asians and Pacific Islanders occurred in times of fierce class wars (articulated through race) from the beginning of the Civil War, the subjugation of the American Indian nations and the Mexican inhabitants of the occupied southwest region, up to the imperialist encroachments into Latin America, Hawaii, and the Philippines. Ideology and jurisprudence followed the logic of capital expansion and colonial administration. State power and ideological apparatuses of civil society functioned within this wider framework to determine the shifting value of ethnic properties (or whatever salient cultural attribute is defined as "ethnic" at a given conjuncture) within the dynamics of fundamental and subsumed class contradictions.

What this implies then is that in rehearsing the narratives of victimization of Asians in the United States, a task that seems to have stigma-

tized us as experts in the putative science of victimology, we need to beware of the traps of liberal patronage. I think it is not enough to simply add that we possess a rich archive of resistance and rebellion. There may be something suspect in claiming that the Chinese or Japanese movement, in seizing the guarantee of equal protection under the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment to redress grievances, blazed the trail for the Civil Rights movement--a global phenomenon that embraced national liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Or celebrating the fact that Japanese and Filipinos spearheaded strikes and militant union organizing in Hawaii and California from the beginning of this century up to the founding of the United Farm Workers of America. Such occasions (too numerous to inventory here) demonstrate how resistance to capital overcomes ethnic separatism and segregation.

Ethnicism, the absolutizing or mystification of ethnicity, occludes racism and delegitimizes resistance to it. We need instead to avoid reifying cultural traits and show how such allegedly fixed and static attributes change under the pressure of circumstances and the transformative force of people's actions. What is imperative is to historicize the so-called ethnic predicament--the salience of cultural practices, customs, traditions, languages, and so on, in situations of uprooting, surveillance, alienation, exclusion, violence--by inscribing the racial marking of Asian bodies and their labor power in the unevenly synchronized but universalizing narratives of the growth, consolidation, and expansion of U.S. capital in the continent and around the world.¹⁷

This leads us to inquire into the function of the now infamous "model minority myth" which, despite being exposed and exploded by numerous critiques that begin to replicate each other, exhibits a curious buoyancy and seems to enact the "return of the living dead" in some comic, late-night TV melodrama.

Initiated principally by pundits of the mass media, this myth was canonized by President Reagan in 1984 and then echoed by *Newsweek*, CBS, and current textbooks. Reagan praised Asians for their high median family incomes ostensibly due to their "hard work" and idiosyncratic "values" that are allowed to flourish within "our political system" of free enterprise and self-help utilitarianism. Some Japanese Americans and Asian Indians have "outwhited the whites," so to speak. Time here forbids me from reiterating the massive fallacies of such ascription, fallacies belied by facts about the spatial distribution of Asians, number of workers per family, the "glass ceiling" for Asian mobility, labor-market segmentation resulting in bipolar status, and so on. Discrepancies exist between effort and achievement, between achievement and reward, enough to expose the disingenuous and genuinely tendentious manipulation of selected data. Deborah Woo comments: "By focusing on the achievements of one minority in relation to another, our attention is diverted from larger institutional and historical factors which influence a

group's success. Each ethnic group has a different history, and a simplistic method of modeling which assumes the experience of all immigrants as the same ignores the sociostructural context in which a certain kind of achievement occurred."¹⁸ This critique is, however, double-edged. Such highlighting of differences, while useful in questioning the claims of hegemonic standards of representation, fails to attack the nerve-center of capital itself, its substantive kernel which insidiously--like the proverbial trickster of indigenous folklore--thrives in the reproduction of novelty, hybridity, and multiplicity fashioned under its aegis.

Again we need to contextualize and ground such propositions in current realities. This new stereotype of America's "preferred minority" must of course be placed within the intense class warfare of the eighties that established the groundwork for today's "Contract With America" for destroying the so-called evils of the welfare state. This raging class war coincides with the decline of U.S. hegemony in the international economy (given its trade imbalance and its change from creditor to debtor nation), the rise of what some scholars call the "underclass," the precipitous deterioration of the white middleclass, and other symptoms of social decay. In a deindustrializing milieu where poverty, homelessness and alienation have worsened, this myth is meant to breathe new life into the consensual ideology of individual success, "habits of the heart" or received commonsense all presumably learned in undertaking the Puritan "errand into the wilderness."

What needs emphasis, I submit, are the uses to which this "model minority myth" has been deployed. First, it reinforces the homogenizing mechanisms of the state and the disciplinary institutions that reduce diverse individuals into one classified, sanitized, uniform "minority." Second, it obscures the presence of disadvantaged Asians and blocks any help for finding employment, learning English, and so on. Third, it serves the "divide-and-rule" strategy of the system by pitting one racialized group against another. If Asians can achieve the American "Dream of Success" by dint of internalizing a work ethic, why can't poor blacks and whites on welfare? It is crucial to keep in mind that the sweatshops in the garment and computer industries, as well as the service sectors, are inhabited more and more by a predominantly multiethnic workforce, thus requiring a more sophisticated policing technique.

Ethnicity and racializing technologies of governance converge here. Ironically, the paradox of absolutizing certain elements of ethnic identity appears when Asians are conceived as both passive and aggressive, complacent and competitive, family-centered and individualistic. Pride in their heritage, family solidarity, fragments of Confucian morality, and so on are used to explain both upward and downward mobility, sporadic recognition and endemic disadvantage, appreciation and resentment. Meanwhile, as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report of 1992 indicates, incidents of hate-crimes, bigotry, denial of equal opportunity, and

violence against Asians have proliferated in the last decades.¹⁹ This culminated in the spectacular fires of 1992 in Los Angeles after the first verdict in the Rodney King trial. Aside from deaths and injuries suffered by individuals, 2,700 Korean businesses--California's new middlemen minority--were destroyed by what is regarded as the first multiethnic rebellion in the United States, a rebellion against police brutality, economic deprivation, and in the last analysis the terrors of a regime of postmodern flexible accumulation.

Now liberals have proposed that we need multicultural education to solve the contemporary crisis, one that would get rid of the basis of institutional racism and any form of "ethnic cleansing" such as the murder of targeted populations. Everyone knows that the movement to revise the Eurocentric canon and curriculum in order to allow the teaching/learning of our society's cultural and racial diversity has been going on since the introduction of "Third World" and Ethnic Studies in the sixties. But one may ask: Has the formula of adding and subtracting texts, or even deconstructing the canonical discourses and hegemonic practices, really succeeded in eliminating chauvinist stereotypes and covert discrimination, not to speak of institutional racism and genocidal policies? Do we really need a pedagogical strategy of commodifying cultural goods/knowledges that consorts well with de facto apartheid in cities like Los Angeles, Atlanta, Detroit, Chicago, Miami, and others?

Like the nativists of old, present-day advocates of immigration reform as well as the sponsors of Proposition 187 in California contend that multiculturalism is precisely the problem. They believe that the "large influx of third-world people...could be potentially disruptive of our whole Judeo-Christian heritage." Multiculturalism even of the liberal variety is considered PC [politically correct] terrorism. It allegedly undermines academic standards. Above all, like feminism, multiculturalism threatens Western civilization and its legacy of free enterprise, rationality, free speech, etc.

Stunned by the large immigrant flow from Latin America and Asia, Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming warned of the danger to national security: "If language and cultural separatism rise above a certain level, the unity and political stability of the Nation will--in time--be seriously eroded. Pluralism within a united American nation has been our greatest strength. The unity comes from a common language and a core public culture of certain values, beliefs, and customs, which make us distinctly 'Americans.'"²⁰ *Pluribus*, it seems, can be tolerated only by dispensation of the *Unum*. Diane Ravitch condemns ethnic particularisms (such as Afrocentrism) and insists on privileging "a common culture," precisely that culture which for all its claims to universality and objectivity sparked the protests and rebellions of the last four decades.²¹ What Ravitch, Simpson, and others are actually prescribing is a return to the ideal of assimilation or integration couched in terms of diversity, a refur-

bished "melting pot" notion of community that would by some magical gesture of wish-fulfillment abolish exploitation, gender and racial inequality, and injustice. The renewed call by assorted fundamentalists to rally behind the flag--a nationalism coded in terms of fighting for freedom, democracy, human rights, and so on--is presented as a substitute for the comfort of ethnic belonging, but I think this can only restore the menace of alienation and the scapegoating of the last half-century. It is also problematic to simply claim that we all benefit or suffer equally unless we see the mutual dependence of victimizer and victimized--the proverbial humanist nostrum of tolerance and love for one another pronounced at the conclusion of this weekend's sermon.

In the light of the historical conflicts surrounding the emergence of Ethnic Studies, Ramon Gutierrez emphasized certain "methodological principles" of the field derived from the intensive study of the histories, languages, and cultures of America's racial and ethnic groups in and among themselves. Aside from the situated and partial nature of all knowledge claims, Gutierrez assumes a postmodernist stance in upholding the principle that "culture was not a unified system of shared meanings, but a system of multivocal symbols, the meanings of which were frequently contested, becoming a complex product of competition and negotiation between various social groups."²² While I would agree that the focus of our discipline is comparative and relational--we explore commonalities and divergences in the experiences of racial and ethnic groups domestically and worldwide-- this does not imply a thoroughgoing relativism or nominalism that would reduce history to a matter of equally suspect perspectives or personal points of view. Such would be the ethnicist "insider's" approach. In analyzing the historical dynamics of race in the United States positioned in global and comparative grids, we are precisely grounding interpretations and judgments based on a consensus of historians that is open to falsifiability. Otherwise, the "culture wars" based on identity politics would not only rule out dialogue but also all communicative action.

As a gloss on this, I would propose that instead of accenting cultural difference and its potential for bantustans, turf wars, liberal apartheid, and even worse "ethnic cleansing" (a cliché that has portentous resonance for the field), we need to attend to the problem of power, the knowledge it produces and that legitimizes it, the uses of such knowledge in disciplinary regimes, and its mutations in history. We need to examine not only the diverse cultures of multiple ethnic groups vis-à-vis the dominant society, the solidarities and conflicts among them, but also how ethnicity itself is linked to and reproduces the market-centered competitive society we live in; how ethnic particularisms or selected cultural differences are mobilized not only to hide systemic contradictions but defuse the challenges and resistances integral to them. As Stephen Steinberg argues, no amount of glorifying ethnic myths and other cul-

tural symbols of identity can hide or downplay the inequality of wealth, power, and privilege in our society that underpins the production of knowledge and the claims to objectivity and transcendent universalism.²³ Insight into such a foundation should not be taken as dogma but a heuristic guide to counter essentializing of identities or utopianization of ethnicity. We cannot theorize the uneven terrain of contestation without a conceptualization of the totality of trends and tendencies. Neither privileging the global nor the local, our approach should be dialectical and praxis-oriented so as to take up the inaugural promise of Ethnic Studies: to open up a critical space for enunciation by those who have been silenced--Paolo Freire's speechless subalterns, or Frantz Fanon's *les damnés de la terre*--within the horizon of a vision of a good and just society accountable to all. The question is: Can we imagine a different and better future for all?

Such a consensus on common purpose should not foreclose disagreements or differences. What it safeguards in this period of nihilism or pragmatic relativism is the temptation of indulgence in playful self-irony, infinite ambiguity or fluid polyvocality with the pretense that this is the most revolutionary stance against reaction and all forms of determinism. In this time of so-called populist backlash, when the politicizing of citizens has been unleashed by the really "politically correct" officials and corporate philosophers, Gutierrez counsels us not to forsake the *grand narratives*: "At a moment when nationalism is reemerging powerfully among students in the United States as well as many other nations and states around the globe, it seems imperative that we see that glorification of local systems of knowledge which are rooted in racial, religious, and ethnic distinctions, as fundamentally tied to the globalization, commodification, and massification of social life."²⁴

We need to investigate above all racism and the accompanying racial politics embedded in the everyday practices of business society, the interaction of racial ideologies with other categories like gender, sexuality, locality, nationality, and so on, in order to cross the boundary between academic theory and practice in the real world. Unless we simply want to be used to peacefully manage the crisis of differences among the "natives" and reinforce the status quo ethos of liberal tolerance, "business as usual," then the practitioners of Ethnic Studies need to be self-critical of received ideas and be not just adversarial but oppositional in accord with its revolutionary beginnings, performing the role of (to quote James Baldwin) unrelenting "disturbers of the peace."²⁵

Notes

¹ Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "The Undermining of Ethnic Studies," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 October 1995, section 2. Hu-DeHart is the chair of the newly established Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder. In this essay I allude to the mainstream proposals offered in two essays: Johnella Butler, "Ethnic Studies: A Matrix Model for the Major," *Liberal Education* 77 (March-April 1991): 26-32; and Johnella Butler and Betty Schmitz, "Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and Multiculturalism," *Change* (January/February 1992): 37-41.

² A review of the historical background is found in: Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); E. San Juan, Jr., *Racial Formations/Critical Formations* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1992); Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs, and Jill Cutler, eds., *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order* (Boston: South End Press, 1993).

³ Angela Davis, "Gender, Class, and Multiculturalism: Rethinking 'Race' Politics," in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, eds. Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 47. My reservations on the Establishment version of multiculturalism are summarized in E. San Juan, Jr. *Hegemony and Strategies of Transgression* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 219-258.

⁴ Similar questions are addressed to the fashionable trend of cultural studies in the academy by Patrick Brantlinger, *Crusoe's Footprints* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁵ Annette Jaimes Guerrero, "Academic Apartheid," in *Mapping Multiculturalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 49-63; and Elizabeth Martinez, "Beyond Black/White: The Racism of Our Time," in *Sources: Notable Selections in Race and Ethnicity* (Guilford, CT: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., 1995): 79-90.

⁶ On inter-ethnic antagonisms, see Edward T. Chang, "America's First Multi-Ethnic Riots," in *The State of Asian America*, ed. Karin Aguilar-San Juan (Boston: South End Press, 1994): 101-118. See also David Roediger, "The Racial Crisis of American Liberalism," *New Left Review* 196 (Nov/Dec., 1992): 114-119.

⁷ On *Herrenvolk* democracy and settler society, see respectively Pierre van den Berghe, *Race and Racism* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), and Dolores Janiewski, "Gendering, Racializing, and Classify-

ing: Settler Colonization in the United States, 1590-1990," in *Unsettling Settler Societies*, ed. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Sage Publications, 1995): 132-160.

⁸ See the census analysis by William P. O'Hare and Judy C. Felt, *Asian Americans: America's Fastest Growing Minority Group*, Monograph 19 (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 1991). According to George Demko, "Nearly one in every four Americans claims African, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American ancestry. By 1995, one third of American public school pupils will be from minorities"; *Why in the World* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992): 385.

⁹ The ideological mechanisms for racializing are reevaluated in Jayne Choong-Son Lee, "Navigating the Topology of Race," in *Critical Race Theory*, ed. Kimberle Crenshaw et al. (New York: The New Press, 1995): 441-448; and Joy James, "Racism, Genocide, and Resistance: The Politics of Language and International Law," in *Marxism in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Antonio Callari et al. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995): 115-125.

¹⁰ Documentation of this history may be found in Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991); and Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1989).

¹¹ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, (New York: Atheneum, 1963).

¹² Gustavus Myers, *History of Bigotry in the United States*, (New York: Random House, 1943).

¹³ Chan, 187.

¹⁴ See Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989); David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

¹⁵ Sun-tzu; Thomas Cleary, *The Art of War/ Sun-tzu: Translated by Thomas Cleary*, (Boston: Shambhala, 1988).

¹⁶ Albert J. Beveridge, "America Must Colonize," in *Racism*, ed. Bruno Leone (St. Paul: Greenhaven Press, 1986): 24-25; see also E. San Juan, *The Philippine Temptation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

¹⁷This is cogently demonstrated by Richard Applebaum, Edna Bonacich and Gregg Scott in their contributions to the anthology cited earlier, *Mapping Multiculturalism*. See also the analysis of the impact of current globalizing trends on California in Paul Ong, Edna Bonacich, and Lucie Cheng, eds., *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

¹⁸Deborah Woo, "The Gap Between Striving and Achieving: The Case of Asian American Women," in *Making Waves*, ed. Asian Women United of California (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989): 186-187.

¹⁹United States Commission of Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Issues Facing Asian Americans in the 1990s*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992). See also Peter Ong, "National Report Reveals Increase in Anti-Asian Hate Crimes," *Asian New Yorker* (September 1995): 1-3.

²⁰Ronald Takaki, ed. *From Different Shores* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 279.

²¹Ravitch in Takaki, 1994, 288.

²²Ramon Gutierrez, "Ethnic Studies: Its Evolution in American Colleges and Universities," in *Multiculturalism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994): 163.

²³Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981).

²⁴Gutierrez, 165.

²⁵James Baldwin. "A Talk to Teachers," in *The Graywolf Annual Five: Multicultural Literacy* (Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 1988): 3-12.