

three conventional premises in the field. It maintains that: 1. The treatment of racial minorities in America is qualitatively different from that experienced by white immigrants. 2. That racism is built into the very foundations of American society, and not a mere aberration. 3. That America's experience with minorities offers an international comparison with other white European groups, where expansion, conquest, and settlement is a normative process in the adaptation of duality. Such is the case for countries such as Australia, South Africa, and Latin American countries. Accordingly, a major objective of this study is to provide a general model for the comparative analysis of race and ethnic relations in societies that are products or influenced by five centuries of European expansion.

According to this reviewer, the most important contribution of this work is that it underscores the fact that legal and political sanctions related to racial and ethnic relations do not occur in a vacuum, but rather, are representative of a larger cultural and social milieu that represent an integral part of the existing status quo. Simply stated, racial and ethnic relations emerge out of a social context that is created and supported by a legal and political framework. In addition, this reviewer appreciates the thorough discussion and analysis provided in chapter one of the internal and external characteristics related to the social construction of race and ethnicity.

This work begins with an interesting social psychological theory of perceptions as a premise for understanding racial and ethnic group formation. Through the book, it purports to integrate this micro foundation with a macro perspective for understanding racial relations, but unfortunately never fully develops this linkage. Instead, it develops a duality thesis that simplifies the implications of this micro-based theory upon macro racial relations. A concluding chapter that resolved the tensions raised by the duality thesis would have made for more thorough analysis. Hence, the work ignores the historical insights raised by the duality thesis and its application for resolving contemporary racial relations.

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A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Jerry W. Ward, Jr., eds. *Redefining American Literary History*. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1990) iv, 406 pp., \$45.00.

The collection by Ruoff and Ward stands within the canon discussion in American literary history, which it briefly recapitulates, placing itself in the multiculturalist camp. The first section of the four-part book can perhaps be called programmatic in just this sense: It points out how much has been overlooked among writings produced in America, and it tries to develop rationales according to which such exclusion might be rectified. Much space is here taken up by questions that concern the material and practical side of research and teaching: anthologies, MLA sessions, and the like. Much is program rather than execution, and in many instances the approach—in accordance with the

policy-making function of such MLA volumes—is practical rather than conceptual.

One revision is privileged, that of the notion of *literature* to include oral texts, which becomes the topic of section two, where the relation between orality and writing is addressed in ways that expand the notion of literature from within, rather than without, though the question of the relation between literature and folklore is repeatedly raised as well.

That such redefinition implies changes in theoretical perspective and method is obvious, and section three (with provoking correctness entitled “Critical and Historical Perspectives on American Literature”) explains some of these, particularly in Houston Baker’s superb essay, “Archaeology, Ideology, and African American Discourse.” Other essays in the section approach the historical survey type, or they try to isolate specific patterns that have proven to be particularly important in the development of a certain literature, or literary discourse. (In the latter context, Ruoff and Foster discuss American Indian and African American autobiographies, respectively). Baker, relying heavily on Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge*, but also drawing on (and drawing into his discussion) other contemporary revisions of literary and cultural (ideological) history, offers a more comprehensive and broadly-based conception of a *literature* that is different from, but related to and part of, *American literature*. Here the ways in which ethnicity, race, gender, and class impinge on the formation of discourse are addressed, the theoretical discussion is intimately connected with specific interpretation, and the programmatic title of the volume is fully justified.

A long (if necessarily selective) and useful bibliographical section four, subdivided by “areas” (minority and multicultural, Afro-American, Native American, Asian American, Chicano, and Puerto Rican), and a list of journals and presses that forms a sort of *coda* round the volume off. No bibliography is without mistakes, and I have (without really looking) found that Sollors’s *Invention of Ethnicity* is here quoted with the title *Inventing and Re-Inventing Ethnicity*, and that Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn* is garnished with a definite article that it does not need.

One of the problems of any such volume is that of balance. If readers expect that in its very proportions and emphases it “mirrors” the distribution and the relative importance of the various literatures within a given area, they should also remember that any such undertaking necessarily embodies the traces of many compromises and accidents. That, for example, Native American literature is represented at somewhat less than the level of relevance it may have in the contemporary scene—and that it is represented primarily by the work of Ruoff—is probably such a trace. All the same, the political question of “representation” is *not* irrelevant and forms a comparative perspective, such as one that is acquainted with the Canadian scene, for example, the virtual exclusion of “white ethnics” (other than Hispanics) from the revisionist picture, indicating how heavily fused with notions of *race* the concept of ethnicity has become in the US. That the volume shirks this very question is clearly indicative of the historical situation from which it emerges.

The collection primarily aims at the recovery of historical material, and it is organized accordingly. Along the way it addresses questions that might well have merited some foregrounding, central as they are to the project of redefinition, and open as their discussion still is. Among these there is the question of legitimation, authenticity, and value, which is discussed, for instance, by Lauter in terms of experience and voice and with the implication that the works of ethnic writers serve purposes of cultural survival: "What is involved in literary history is survival." This implies questions regarding the nature of history and the problematic relevance of the past to the present. Wiget, for instance, argues entirely in terms of the integrity of the "other" (here: the American Indian) tradition, so that the proper reading of a text proceeds by a reconstruction from within that tradition. Textual meaning is here entirely based in the other culture, viewed holistically. This may have something to do with the fact that he deals in traditional texts primarily, but elsewhere the question does arise in how far the traditional element (the ethnic element) used in a modern anglophone text is still the same and contains its traditional aspects. Or, to put it differently: The question arises how intercultural such texts are.

This problem, which I believe to be *the* issue of coming discussions, is once again not foregrounded by the volume, which can, it seems to me, fairly be described as placing itself more or less firmly within the confines of a separatist (though not a militantly separatist) multiculturalism.

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Kathleen Mullen Sands, ed. *Circle of Motion: Arizona Anthology of Contemporary American Indian Literature*. (Tempe: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1990), xviii, 165 pp., \$21.95 cloth; \$15.95 paper.

The subtitle of this collection raises a question: Is it wise to mix various genres and also authors from very different tribes and then to limit this mixture by the arbitrary geographical borders of a state?

A careful study of the book will answer this question positively. There are Arizona bonds between the American Indian authors represented that are distinct, from the mysterious past of the Anasazi, petroglyphs on cliff walls, and Gila monsters, to ruthless mining methods in today's Black Mesa valleys and to the problems of school children and veterans from Arizona's thirty-two reservations. Above all, Arizona's desert landscape with its mountains, canyons, and rivers permeates the collection.

Kathleen Mullen Sands explains in her preface that many of the contributors are from tribes outside the state, but all of them have experienced "the Arizona tribal life in the Arizona landscape." That means we can find here well-known authors like Joseph Bruchac, Maurice Kenny, Lance Henson, Joy Harjo, and Mary TallMountain whom we do not "naturally" connect with Arizona. The