

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

played traditional music at a local bar for thirty-two years. He and his *conjunto* are fired in favor of more contemporary, younger musicians. During the group's last performance, all the ghosts of the great Mexican musicians and singers show up to pay tribute. The tale ends as Juan puts the silver dollar in the tip fishbowl for the new musicians.

Trevino's work starts off gently with a warm picture of quaint characters in a Chicano community, but during the course of the collection revs up to the point of full blown social satire when he reaches "The Great Pyramid of Aztlan." This delightfully funny story is about a pyramid scheme, literally and figuratively, as a group of Chicanos seek federal funding to construct a monument to their heritage in the Arizona desert. So many politicians, government funding agencies, philanthropic groups, and even foreign governments latch on to the seemingly innocuous and socially bland enterprise that it winds up creating a worldwide sensation, causing international focus on the Mexican-Americans: "Before the *piramide*, no one knew who or what Chicanos were. Now, we have twenty reps in congress and a half-dozen senators." The tale and the collection end on a note of optimism as the pyramid's creator, aptly name Zapata, muses that the pyramid "has shown what we can do with our own institutions. It's allowed us to get someplace we hadn't been before."

The Fabulous Sinkhole ranges from the quaint, humorous, and gentle, to the fantastic, satirical, and ironic. It is a rich, well-written, and brilliantly conceived view of a microcosm of Chicano life in the late twentieth century.

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William H. Tucker. *The Science and Politics of Racial Research.* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

Since there is usually a two year period of time that elapses between the acceptance of a manuscript by a university press and its publication, we must commend William H. Tucker, who is an associate professor of psychology at Rutgers University, in his anticipation of contemporary controversies in reference to the relative abilities of *racas*. Tucker argues that there is continuity in the thought of racists, which over the past two centuries include anthropometricians, eugenicists, and segregationists. "The imprimatur of science," Tucker argues cogently, "has been offered to justify, first slavery and, later, segregation, nativism, socio-political inequality, class subordination, poverty, and the general futility of social and economic reform." For Tucker, the attempt to demonstrate that one race is genetically "less intelligent than others has been scientifically valueless and socially harmful." Scientific research

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into racial differences has, in essence, resulted in the "legitimation" of racist ideology. Nevertheless, Tucker is not pessimistic about winning the battle with racists. "America's democratic political traditions," he writes, "have prevailed, and today universal suffrage, equal rights under law, and the guarantee of other civil liberties to all citizens are no longer up for debate; where demonstrable infringement has occurred, there is generally outrage and prompt redress."

Despite my fundamental agreement with most of Tucker's arguments and my belief that he has told the truth, I do not think he has told the whole truth. By focusing most of his attention on racists, Tucker has virtually ignored that antiracist discourse, which began with the poet Phillis Wheatly during the period of the American Revolution, manifested itself in the abolitionist crusade—due primarily to the perceptible influence of African Americans such as Fredrick Douglass and James McCune Smith—permeated the social sciences after 1920s because of the domineering presence of the German-Jewish immigrant and father of modern American anthropology, Franz Uri Boas, and reached the peak of its influence in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. By giving attention to this tradition of colorblind egalitarianism, Tucker would have come to grips with why the racist tradition until recent times in the United States has been proactive, rather than reactive. Put another way, the parameters of the discourse on the purported relative abilities of the so-called races of mankind have traditionally been framed by racists.

It should also be noted that the first four chapters of this book is merely cover ground that has been treated in greater depth in older historical works. Nevertheless, Tucker's real contribution is his definitive refutation of Jensenism, his call for the necessity of regulating racial science, and his demonstration that the attempt to prove the innate intellectual inferiority of some groups "is probably scientifically chimerical and certainly lends itself to socially pernicious ends."

In short, this book deserves the close attention of all scholars and laymen interested in a study in the exercise of futility which mars the study of race.

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Laura Uba. *Asian Americans: Personality Patterns, Identity, and Mental Health.* (NY: The Guilford Press, 1994) 302 pp., \$33.95.

When looking at issues of ethnicity and mental health we are constantly reminded that there is, at present, no unified paradigm to guide either the practitioner or the research scholar. What we do know is that the human organism is a socially constructed being. We also know that