

avoid the biological essentialism of the apartheid era, Pickel completely avoids discussions of the relationship between race and ethnicity. Although it is common to conflate race and ethnicity for the purposes of political manipulation (as in the US Census) or for creating popular understandings of cultural difference, responsible social analysis must take into consideration the difference and cannot reduce the one to the other. Faye Harrison, Carol Mukhopadhyay, and Yolanda Moses, among others, have recently shown the dangers of attempts to shy away from race as a category for social analysis. In the South African case, the tendency to embed race within ethnicity, or to avoid discussions of race altogether, is particularly dangerous. First of all, it is historically inaccurate, because the social categories of apartheid were defined by crude racial measures. Far from being fashioned out of the highly nuanced language of ethnicity, phenotype, as perceived by those in power, was the most salient component of apartheid social categories. In addition, racial categories that were once a die-cast product of South Africa's apartheid machinery continue to lie at the center of social interaction and political mobilization.

As South Africa stands on the verge of its second democratic national elections, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the mobilization tactics of current political parties from those of the past, particularly in regard to the use of racial categories. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of the Western Cape coloureds. Pickel's exploratory study provides a helpful, though brief, introduction to the challenges facing the social scientist who tries to unravel the complex, contextualized strands of ethnicity. And for those trying to better understand South Africa, she highlights just how diverse this Rainbow Nation's colors are. □

From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954. Lee D. Baker. Berkeley, CA, and London, UK: University of California Press, 1998. xii + 325 pp., 14 black and white illustrations. (Cloth US\$40, Paper US\$17.95).

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In recent decades, young minority scholars in various fields have looked more intensively into the histories of their disciplines. Not surprisingly, they have found

Transforming Anthropology, Volume 9, Number 1
2000

widespread and deeply rooted elements of race ideology in the growth and maturation of their fields. Lee Baker's book is an excellent example of what may be discovered when we look closely enough at the field of anthropology.

The bulk of the substantive historical material for this volume ranges from the 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision of the US Supreme Court, which legalized segregation, to the 1954 decision, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which began the legal desegregation process. But the contents range over more than just the events of this period. Baker examines the precursors of these developments in race ideology, particularly the positions of the first "American School" of anthropology and their attempts to document scientifically the inequality of the races earlier in this century. He goes on to show how intellectuals and scholars of the late nineteenth century, men like Daniel Brinton, John Wesley Powell, Lewis Henry Morgan, Frederic Ward Putnam, and Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, promoted race ideology along with Social Darwinism. Some of this promotion of the racial worldview was done through museums and other exhibits which portrayed "savage races" at the bottom of the evolutionary model with "civilized" white men at the top. Various expositions and fairs, attended by millions of Americans, either denigrated or omitted the black experience in the United States. Many early writers on anthropological topics advanced the racial worldview of exclusive biological populations that are fundamentally unequal in popular magazines and journals throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth century.

Some of the more significant information in this volume reveals the works of Franz Boas, and particularly his involvement with the then-reigning black intellectuals and leaders—Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson and others. It was during this era that African-Americans became interested in anthropology, and this was due, in large part, to Boas' encouragement. Boas challenged racist assumptions in American culture, and was a major influence on Du Bois' own vision of racial equality. Vindicationist literature began to reflect some of the attitudes toward "race" that Boas and his followers promulgated, particularly the separation of biology from culture or behavior, a position at which, Baker notes, Du Bois had independently arrived.

For younger anthropologists, perhaps the most important sections have to do with the role of black anthropologists and other scholars who fought racism from a base at Howard University. Scholars,

particularly at the law school, became the core of the NAACP legal council when it began to attack segregation laws. They incorporated some of the perspectives and findings of Boasian anthropologists in their legal arguments against racism. Their efforts first came to fruition in the famous 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision and continued successfully with later civil rights acts.

A valuable part of this volume is Baker's exploration of some of the legal decisions, from *Plessy to Brown to Adar and Constructors vs. Peña*, that have influenced relations between Blacks and whites, and helped to transform attitudes. He briefly examines a number of well-known and not-so-well-known Supreme Court cases, and the positions that the NAACP Legal Fund lawyers advanced to argue for equal treatment. The arguments in these cases reflected the progressive twentieth-century research findings of both anthropologists and psychologists on "race" and "racial" differences.

The last chapter goes beyond the Brown decision to look at more recent developments dealing with "race," particularly in the media and popular literature.

Baker comments on recent articles in popular publications such as *Newsweek* that revealed some of the new scientific understandings of "race" and human variation, and he critiques the resurgence of interest in IQ via *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein and Murray 1994).¹

Baker is rightly critical of conservatives who argue for a "color blind" society by using the findings of biological anthropologists that have failed to prove the existence of biological races. "Race" is a social invention; it has never been a biological reality (Smedley 1999 [1993]). The history of how "race" has been viewed in American culture and in anthropology shows how arbitrary has been the treatment of "race" and "races" in public policy and in the prevailing sciences.

We need more young scholars like Baker to expose the elements of racial thinking in the history of various sciences, and to make the case for a more refined development of how we view and treat the social reality of "race." The recent study by the Institute of Medicine at the National Academy of Sciences entitled, *The Unequal Burden of Cancer* (Haynes and Smedley eds. 1999), is another step in this direction.

NOTE

1. *Ed.*: *The Bell Curve* was reviewed by Lansana Keita in *TA* 6(1&2) [1997]:87-89.

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The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City. Roger Sanjek. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998. xiv + 465 pp. (Cloth US\$35)

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This is an excellent book and a welcome relief from the muddy stream of depressing studies of intractable poverty, "ethnic" conflict, educational dysfunction, family breakdown, drug addiction, crime and mindless violence—the vast majority of them based on survey research and minimal acquaintance with the everyday lives of the people studied. Roger Sanjek, an anthropologist and member of the faculty of Queen's College of the City University of New York, devoted most of thirteen years to the part-time study of the Elmhurst-Corona district of the Borough of Queens, thus ensuring as intimate and first-hand knowledge of a complex urban area as we are likely to see. This extended period of study produces a dense array of material on community action in which the purely local is illuminated by careful reference to developments in city, state, and national policy—political, social, and economic.

Begun in 1984 as the "New Immigrants and Old Americans Project," the study involved at least fifteen research workers in addition to the author, most of whom had special language skills and social contacts in the various sections of the population studied, including Taiwanese Chinese, Cuban, Dominican and other Latin Americans, Koreans, South Asian Indians, and African

Transforming Anthropology, Volume 9, Number 1
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