

Multicultural America

Summary

Paul Auster's Caustic Criticism at America

— *Leviathan* and Multiculturalism —

Junichi KIMIZUKA

Paul Auster finally seems to have found a way to identify himself as a Jew in multicultural America. In his eighth novel, *Leviathan*, he traces his origin back to his Jewish ancestors who immigrated to the United States in 1880s. By showing the hypocrisy of American history, in which minorities have been persecuted and massacred since 1776, Benjamin Sacks (the Phantom of Liberty), a latter-day Henry David Thoreau, questions whether this nation indeed cherish the ideals symbolized in the Statue of Liberty. So through the book, Sacks blows up replicas of the Statue of Liberty. The tone of *Leviathan* was strongly influenced by contemporaneous political events in America, such as the Rodney King incident, which occurred the year the novel was published, and the Gulf War from the previous year.

Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* and the Art of Storytelling

Shuzo SAITO

Sandra Cisneros was born in 1954 in Chicago, Illinois, to a Mexican father and a Chicana mother. Cisneros's childhood was spent in a variety of run-down Hispanic neighborhoods until 1966 when her parents bought a small bungalow in a Puerto Rican neighborhood on Chicago's north side. These experiences inspired her first book, *The House on Mango Street* (1984), which received the Before Columbus American Book Award in 1985.

A collection of short stories about a young Chicana coming of age in a Chicago barrio, this novel has been translated all over the world. Its wide range of interpretational levels has allowed it to be taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country.

Esperanza, the main character and narrator, is struggling to become an educated, empowered woman. Her stories give voice to the people who have not traditionally been heard in the mainstream culture. She makes us aware of the racial and economic oppression her community suffers, but it is the fate of colored women in her barrio that has the most profound impact on

her. She speaks from and for the marginalized. She creates and chronicles her developing identity by noting, recording, and responding to the lives of victimized women around her. This is why the stories are dedicated “A las Mujeres — To the women.” Thus Cisneros's work explores such issues as sexism, racism, and classism, enabling us to increase our understanding of the complexities of American society and culture.

African American Identities in Multicultural America

— Through the Black Motion Pictures —

Hiroko IWAMOTO

The purpose of this paper is to research the African American identities in multicultural America through the black motion pictures. Young black directors, such as Spike Lee, John Singleton, Mario Van Peebles, tried to insist their opinions through their motion pictures. For example, “Do the Right Thing,” “Boyz n the Hood,” “New Jack City,” and so on. There are also, African American women who tried to write the poems in order to tell themselves own in the motion pictures, such as, “Poetic Justice,” “Love Jones,” and so on.. Their godmother is the poet, Maya Angelou. Maya’s poems and words have encouraged her spiritual daughters.

When we think about the multicultural society, two motion pictures are very effective, so called, “Soul Man” and “American History X”. Both of them could tell us about ‘after’ affirmative action which was one of the fruits of the civil rights movement.

Navajo Community College

— A Struggle for Self Determination and Multicultural Education —

Yutaka KUROIWA

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the unique features of Navajo Community College. The college was established in 1968 as the first tribal college in the United States. After touching upon the history of formal education on the Navajo reservation, the paper discusses the social background in the 1960s which led to the inception of the tribal college. Secondly, the study discusses how the college was initiated, referring to the development of the college in the 1970s and the common problems facing tribal colleges in the United States. Then, the study analyzes the curriculum of the college to see its characteristics. The analysis shows that the curriculum is composed of two different kinds of components aiming at assimilation and multicultural education. The study argues that the college has an institutional contradiction in that it tries

to teach and study Navajo culture, history and language, relying on the non-Navajo institution known as college. Finally, the analysis of graduates' majors reveals that what the college is trying to provide is different from what the students expect of the college. The study concludes that Navajo Community College is operated by the two conflicting forces of assimilationism and multiculturalism.

Backlash and Multiculturalism

Toshiro SAKO

In the 1990s, America experienced a white backlash against non-whites and new immigrants on the issues of affirmative action and multiculturalism. The white group that wanted to abolish affirmative action in job placement and university admissions claimed that the concept of affirmative action was itself a form of "reverse discrimination." Also, some whites believed that multiculturalism was an evil concept that could lead America away from its traditional European values.

One of the reasons behind the white backlash was the fear among some of them that they would lose their position as a majority and become a minority by the year 2050.

Whether America will be a divided country or will reunite under a new type of 'Americanism' is the critical question for the 21st Century.