

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

onto the reservation and to allot the land to individuals. The Steenerson Act of 1904 provided for additional allotment of acreage. While the Burke Act of 1906 stressed a continued protection of native resources by the federal government until individuals were competent based on their 'industriousness,' the Clapp Amendment of 1906 claimed adult 'mixed bloods' as competent by virtue of their genetic makeup.

Ultimately, incorporating a world systems model, Meyers points to economic forces which work to alienate land from the Anishnaabeg. For the convenience of land alienation many tribal members were classified into the mixed blood category based on spurious anthropological reckoning and outright fraud. By 1920 the majority of reservation land, today a mere 7% of its original extent, had been alienated.

The Anishnaabeg themselves fought to determine their own future. The conservative faction attempts to expel the *Metis* who aided the outside timber and land interests but the federal government intervened to stop this action. This breaks an important Anishinaabeg form of internal political action—group splitting when accord cannot be reached. Meyers, in her conclusion, shows that the Anishinaabeg continue to act for their own interests in their quest to restore their lands and rights.

Meyer is impartial to all sides in this very complex historical situation, showing advantage and disadvantage to positions taken by all groups involved. She is also careful to point to blatant injustices in the past and their ramifications for the present. The work provides a superb bibliographic essay and is well illustrated with comprehensive maps and photographs. I highly recommend this work for those interested in ethnicity and its historical importance for social, political, and economic spheres.

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Marcyliena Morgan, ed. *Language and the Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*. (Los Angeles, CA: Center for Afro-American Studies Publications, University of California, 1994) 158pp., \$15.95 paper.

The result of a 1990 conference on "The Social Significance of Creole Language Studies" sponsored by Pomona and Pitzer of the Claremont Colleges and the University of California, Los Angeles, this stimulating collection of six papers enriches the field of pidgin and creole studies by "exploring the manner in which language and language choice reflect and mediate the social landscape."

The purpose of the conference was "to discuss and share views on the nature of the social situation of the language with which they [the participating scholars] work." In the spirited "Introduction," the editor argues that most linguistic attempts at establishing the "legitimacy" of

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creole languages in society have ignored their social and political dimensions by "measuring" them against monolingual models of language usage. Answering to the definite need for studies that address issues pertaining to creoles' standardization, to the intimate relation with the culture in which these languages flourish or the culture in which they sometimes struggle to survive, and to educational policies that more often than not plan inequality for their speakers, this volume successfully provides insight on "language and power, identity, and loyalty" as factors which aid in understanding and explaining creole language situations.

Although it is surprising that none of the guest contributors works in the area of sociolinguistics—a subfield of linguistics which is closely associated with discussions on linguistic identity—the variety of perspectives represented (linguistics, anthropology, and education) displays a fruitful kaleidoscope of ideas. Mervyn Alley's paper, "Problems of Standardization of Creole Languages," clearly elaborates on his strong defense of Jamaican as an autonomous natural language and as a symbol of national identity. This is a concept he has always passionately supported vis-a-vis Western traditional but, from his standpoint, controversial analyses. In "Language Standardization and Linguistic Fragmentation in Tok Pisin," Suzanne Romaine shows first-hand knowledge of Papua New Guinea's linguistic and social struggle for national integration as English and Tok Pisin claim urban and rural speakers respectively. Surprisingly enough, Donald Winford's article on "Sociolinguistic Approaches to Language Use in the Anglophone Caribbean," although otherwise quite sensitive to the need for preserving the speakers' identity through the institutionalization of their creoles as official languages, totally ignores the problems of some anglophone creole speakers, those members of coastal minorities whose languages vie for survival in Spanish-speaking Central American nations. In keeping with his tendency to question provocatively all theoretical constructs on which creolization is based, Salikoko Mufwene argues in his paper, "On Decreolization: the Case of Gullah," that, according to his observations, creoles are unlikely to decreolize (i.e., to change their acrolectal structure), since their dynamic and vital interaction in social networks along ethnic lines keeps the speakers' identity and loyalty alive. The situation described by Karen Watson-Gegeo in "Language and Education in Hawai'i: Sociopolitical and Economic Implications of Hawai'i Creole English," reminds me of the unsurmountable multilingual educational problems of Third World countries, which should hardly be a likely scenario for a region in the United States. Finally, Marcyliena Morgan's "The African-American Speech Community: Reality and Sociolinguists," drives home the need for sociolinguists to view language as a link to culture and ideology, and not just the key to success.

The book has been carefully edited; there was only a minor oversight: Footnote No. 18 is missing (142). All the papers have been

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meticulously documented by useful bibliographies. By addressing and analyzing the complex social issues that surround the existence of creole languages, these scholars have not only provided an animated intellectual discussion, but they have also greatly strengthened the cause of their speakers.

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Don L. F. Nilsen. *Humor Scholarship: A Research Bibliography. Bibliographies and Indexes in Popular Culture, Number 1.* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993) 382 pp., \$65.00.

Too often, the study of humor lacks the very thing it analyzes. That is one of the reasons Don Nilsen's humor bibliography is such a pleasant surprise. In the cataloguing and describing of the seemingly endless number of humor books and articles, Nilsen has managed to capture the tone of the subject while still doing this tedious job impressively.

The structure of the book makes finding a source relatively easy. Chapter titles, such as "Humor and Ethnicity," are clear and directive, and the subheadings within chapters, such as "The Humor of Native American Ethnicity," easily point a researcher in the right direction. The Appendix is especially helpful to those working toward publication, for it lists journals, magazines, publishing houses, individuals, and organizations which deal specifically with humor.

Chapter six is divided into three sections covering ethnic humor in general, Black ethnic humor, and Native American humor. In the third section, Nilsen introduces the bibliography by discussing the major differences in the way Native Americans view the world, including cultural differences in time, wealth, nature, and relationships, thus leading to their different sense of humor. He also identifies the two most common comic symbols: the coyote and the "ritual clown," which also serves "a moral function" by showing the people "how not to behave." Nilsen's specific discussion in the introduction is limited mainly to the Navajo (mentioning Apache and Hopi only once apiece), but his bibliography lists over twenty books and articles useful for more specific study.

It is in these introductions that Nilsen's own appreciation for humor surfaces, making them not only informative but also delightful. Nilsen combines knowledge definitions, distinctions, and scholarly quotations—with examples to illustrate as well as to entertain. For example, in the introduction to "Jokes, Riddles, Hoaxes, and Stand-up Comedy," Nilsen recounts one of Steven Wright's jokes: "He talks about how he found a strange light switch in his house that didn't turn anything on or off.