

# Alliance

AN ETHNIC NEWSPAPER AT KSU

March 1985

## MANHATTAN'S BLACK PIONEERS

(Editor's Note: The following account of the Black community history in Manhattan, Kansas resulted from reviewing early project reports and discussing the findings with Dr. Nupur Chaudhuri, KSU Historian, who directed the oral history research project. The Manhattan Black Community History project, reported on first in the February 1984 issue of Alliance, was funded in part by a grant from the Kansas Committee for the Humanities.)

The number of Afro-Americans in the state of Kansas rose from 343 in 1855 to 49,710 in 1880. However, although the Afro-American constituted a sizable and important minority group in Kansas and in Manhattan, Chaudhuri said, the lives and experiences of its citizens - from their own perspective - rarely have been documented or discussed.

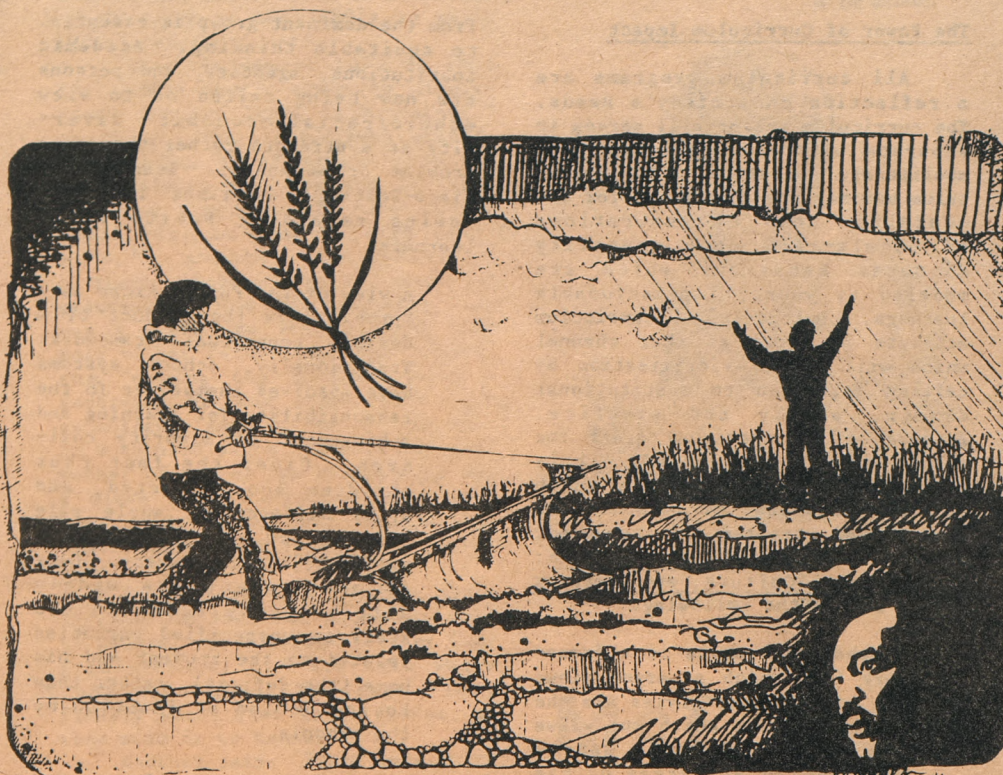
"Before the migration of 1879, there were about 100 Blacks living in Manhattan and they had established a viable community for themselves. But little is known about these Black pioneers," she said.

The major method of Chaudhuri's work was to record extensive interviews with elderly Black citizens in this community. The senior citizens, who Chaudhuri and several KSU students interviewed, were over 60 years of age or had lived in Manhattan for over 50 years. In a few cases, the team interviewed members of the third generation of Afro-Americans to live in Manhattan.

The project focuses on a time span of 61 years, from 1879 to 1940. Often the interviewees' memories did not go back that far, Chaudhuri said. So, to fully appreciate their narratives, older written sources were consulted to provide a broader historical perspective on the community the Afro-American pioneers created in the early days of Manhattan.

### Early History

In 1855 the territorial census of Kansas shows that there were 13 Blacks and mulattoes who lived in Riley and the adjacent territories of Pottawatomie, Clay, Marshall, and Washington, Chaudhuri's work revealed.



This visual conception of the first Black pioneers to weather the Kansas prairies and help settle Manhattan was drawn for Alliance by Kenyon Maddon.

"According to the 1865 state census, ten-year-old J. Henry was the only Black person living in Manhattan," she said. "He worked for Mr. R. H. Kimble." The records of marriage certificates in Manhattan show that Edom and Amanda Thomas were married on November 9, 1865 and the 1870 census identified Edom Thomas as a Black person who came from Kentucky.

"The Black population in the mid 1860's was apparently substantial because records of the Methodist Church show that the first Black church in Manhattan was built in 1866," she said.

The federal census of 1870 indicates that of the total population of 1,173 in Manhattan, 65 were Blacks or mulattoes. These people came primarily from Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, Arizona, North Carolina, Texas, Indiana, and Illinois. A majority of the men worked as laborers in surrounding farms or in

town. The census also reveals that among 21 Black women and female children, five were gainfully employed.

Chaudhuri said little is known about the personal lives of these Black men and women. However, written accounts of individuals provide some information about the backgrounds of early settlers, like Sallie Breakbill from Tennessee, Sarah Craig from Missouri, and Matilda Austin who, with her family, came to Manhattan from North Carolina in the 1860s.

"Sallie Breakbill had been sold away from her husband before the Civil War," Chaudhuri said. "By this first husband she had two children, Will and Deborah Fields. Later she married Breakbill and had three sons, two of whom died in infancy. Soon after that Breakbill left Sallie."

Will Fields, Sallie's son, attended Kansas State Agricultural College, Chaudhuri discovered. The

records show that around August, 1879 he went to Indian Territory to "resume" his school teaching, and he came back to Manhattan in January, 1880.

(It is interesting to note that according to K-State Alumni records, the first Black to graduate from KSU did so in 1908. This means Will Fields at least attended Kansas State nearly 30 years before, shortly after the school opened in 1863.)

Will's sister, Deborah Fields, worked for a prominent, Manhattan settler family the Joseph Pillsburys, to help Will get an education, she said. Chaudhuri's records show that Ellen Ellsworth-Martin, daughter of Joseph Pillsbury, described Sallie Fields Breakbill (Will and Deborah's mother) in the following words:

I remember seeing Aunt Sallie come into the Baptist Church with her little brood every Sunday morning. They sat in the part of the church which was called the "Amen Corner." They were always starched and clean. Aunt Sallie wore a large white sunbonnet and a big white apron that would almost stand alone . . . Aunt Sallie was a fine Christian woman.

The early account written by Pillsbury's daughter said Sarah Craig's mother was Clarinda Craig.

"Clarinda worked as a midwife beginning in the late 1870's," Chaudhuri said. Ellen (Pillsbury) stated that "a good many of Manhattan's early citizens owe their lives to Auntie Craig for the wonderful care she gave them." Clarinda was described as tall and dignified.

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## Am. Indian Book Wins

A Chippewa Indian writer, Louise Erdrich, has been named winner in the Fiction category in the 10th annual National Book Critics Circle Awards for her first novel, *Love Medicine*.

The novel, about two families on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas reservation in North Dakota, was chosen by the 400-member organization in New York January 14. Scrolls for the 1984 publishing year awards were presented at an awards dinner January 31.

Erdrich's prize is the first major award to an American Indian author since N. Scott Momaday won the Pulitzer Prize for his 1969 novel, *House Made of Dawn*. She is the wife of Professor Michael Dorris, who heads the Native American Studies program at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H.

Digby Diehl, book editor of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, wrote this description of the selection process which led to Erdrich's book being chosen: "Love Medicine," the winner in Fiction, is a book that had been virtually unknown prior to its nomination for the awards. In fact, only four members of the board had even read this first novel, which was published just at the end of 1984. But the enthusiasm of these four persuaded the board to

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## multicultural curriculum

## TOWARD EQUITABLE THINKING

By James Boyer

The structural inequities which still exist in America are the result of thought patterns by those who make academic, political, economic, and social decisions that dictate and monitor behavior. All behavior emanates from a mentality which implies human value and human worth at some level. All educational programs must have three components: personnel, budget, and curriculum. Every curriculum program makes a silent statement which assigns value and human worth to the clients of that program. Priorities are established, learning sequences are ordered, and program resources are allocated--and all of these functions make statements regarding the structure of our society, the signs, symbols and ceremonies which are deemed significant, and the value placed on human

profiles. Structural inequities are policies, practices, program sequences, systems and patterns of reward and punishment, and a host of other aspects of organizational operations perceived as inequitable by those who study public institutions, institutional practices and their impact on culturally diverse

Only when curriculum programs are based on assumptions of equity will American schooling begin to seriously reflect multiculturalism.

populations. Structural inequities exist, in our judgment, because equitable thinking patterns are underemphasized in modern curriculum practice.

Multicultural curriculum provides both individual studies on culturally distinct populations and

restructured (often fused) sequences in traditional disciplines so that content and practice are seen from a broader perspective than monocultural applications. Without apology, my position is that monocultural curriculum results in racist, sexist, elitist thinking by all student/clients of such programs and by those whose professional services direct and implement those curriculum learnings. While a major part of curriculum involves content (data, facts, inferences, emphases), there are also materials, artifacts, policies, practices and processes which are as much a part of the learnings as are elements of content.

### Toward an Equitable Education

Only when curriculum programs are based on assumptions of equity

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# Equitable Thinking (From p. 1)

will American schooling begin to seriously reflect multiculturalism.

Ethnic and racial identity are clearly connected to the learner's grasp of curriculum content and skills. The way in which a learner is viewed in the learning setting impacts the learner's belief in his or her ability to achieve. Vincent P. Franklin in *Review of Research in Education* offers the following:

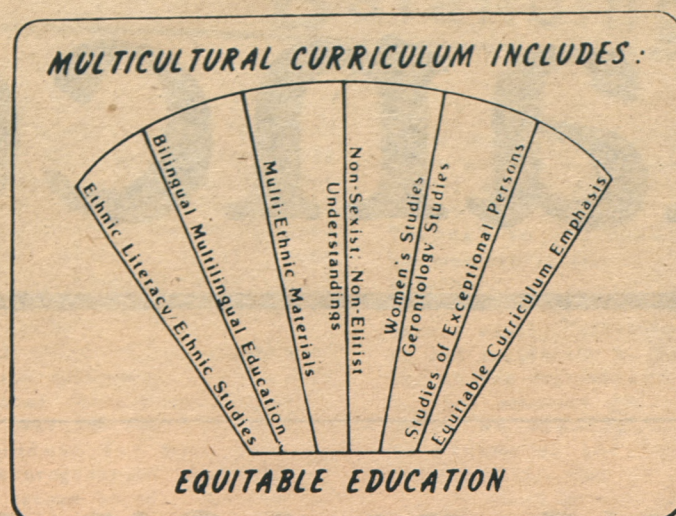
"Historians have generally found significant differences in the patterns of schooling for white immigrant-ethnic minorities--Afro-Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans and Asian Americans." "The exploitation and oppression were even more severe for the groups that differed physically, as well as culturally, from white Americans..."

All major documents of the United States (the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, etc.) all purport equity for all persons who are part of our society. The presence or existence of structural inequities suggest that a transformation of thought in quest of equitable decision-making is needed.

When one looks at the curriculum programs of various contours of schooling, the pattern of thinking adopted by learners is shaped by (1) what is included in the formal curriculum (2) what is excluded (3) what is emphasized (4) to what extent is the human diversity encompassed in the program of learning--and perceived as positive elements to be appreciated (5) what photographic, visual or other declarations are made significant elements of curriculum learning.

## Multicultural Curriculum: The Vehicle

Multicultural curriculum emerged as an upgrading of traditional curricula which historically reflected a monocultural perspective on learning content--and ultimately monocultural decision-making--for the major institutions of our society. Equitable thinking will result only from equitable curriculum immersion by those who are shaped by the power of curriculum by those who are shaped by the power of curriculum forces. To be sure, there are many dimensions of multicultural curriculum, however, it functions to enhance America's movement toward a society deemed more equitable because it will reflect reduced racism, sexism, elitism, handicapism, and ageism. The following diagram suggests some significant aspects of multicultural curriculum:



## The Power of Curriculum Impact

All curriculum programs are a reflection on society's needs. The curriculum essentially serves to separate literate societies from nonliterate societies. The curriculum becomes the foundation for the mentality held by generations of people--and such mentality dictates behaviors which are modeled by young, impressionable learners. Multicultural curriculum attempts to serve as that channel which will reduce victimization by calling attention to institutional design, policy and practice. Because of its continual quest for equity in all its strands, it is concerned with the way in which persons (or groups of persons) are seen viewed, treated and respected. Janice Hale in *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles* offers the following:

A behavioral style is a framework from which a person views the world. Since styles are the framework from which one views the world, the style can be observed in all areas of his expression, such as through his world view, language, music, religion, art work, dance, problem solving, sports, writing, or any other area of human expression.

Behavioral style is directly related to behavioral consequences and multicultural curriculum is a primary vehicle for improved behavioral consequences because it offers types of equitable thinking from which all else emerges.

## The Transformation

A transformed view of persons and groups representing differences

from the dominant group is essential to equitable thinking. Academic institutions, agencies, and persons are now being called on to view ethnic/racial/economic diversity as a strength rather than as a problem or weakness. Isaura Santiago-Santiago describes the following regarding Puerto Rican learners:

A view of the Puerto Rican as a "problem" is the product of a deficit conceptual framework. Traditionally, school systems have absolved themselves of the responsibility for learning and achievement of minority children. Given the fact that children looked, acted, and spoke differently, whole sale failure was the product of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Lack of achievement was widely attributed by teachers and staff to unspecified variables related to the student and his home (the deficit), rather than to any action or inaction by the schools.

The action by the schools (at whatever level) is now appropriately felt to be the school's major element: its curriculum upgraded to multicultural status. The curriculum will be viewed and treated as

a vehicle for raising the standard of a country, a society, a people.

It was only when the major reports of school programs were published (a Nation at Risk and many others) that America began to publicly admit that its schools were the foundation of the quality of life for all. Now that politicians, business persons, lay citizens,

professionals from all areas are discussing America's schools, it seems only appropriate to utilize this opportunity for further developing curriculum programs toward multicultural status.

Burgess, in describing Native American learning styles, indicates the need for curriculum designs which embrace cultural specificity;

...Recognition and respect for the tribal culture by the school can bestow dignity upon the culture and heavily impact the development of positive self-images by the children who must relate to both the tribal culture and the school.

## Multicultural Curriculum: Channel for all Learners

While this discussion has focused on the benefits of multiculturalism for populations historically excluded from the mainstream of decision-making in America, it is pointed out that all learners (specifically referring to white ethnics as well as highly visible ethnic minorities) may be transformed in their thinking through exposure to curriculum which embraces cultural mobility and ethnic identity. Such exposure enhances the psychological well-being of all learners as well as the cognitive growth so carefully monitored in academic institutions.

Further, throughout this discussion, the references have focused on ethnic-racial-economic differences as reflected in human profiles. While multicultural

curriculum encompasses the linguistically different, the exceptional and handicapped individuals, and works to eliminate sexism, there are those who feel that those categories must be addressed separately. Some curriculum researchers have elected to address those issues independently from the broad issues discussed here. (Some of these discussions are in other papers included in *Educational Considerations, KSU, Fall 1984.*)

Multicultural curriculum, at least for the present, seems to be the basic foundation for improved, equitable thought processes in America which will result in decreased victimization of children and adults who experience schooling--both formal and informal.

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## Multicultural Education :

any educational endeavor concerned with awareness and elimination of racism, sexism, elitism, handicapism, and/or ageism and affirmation of the worth and dignity of each individual.

-Mary Harris for College of Education  
Multicultural Task Force  
Educational Considerations, Fall, 1984

## Elitism :

the belief that social or economic class is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and justifies class rule; actions or statements that reflect such a belief.

## Ageism :

the belief that age is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities; actions or statements that reflect such a belief.

## Handicappism :

the belief that the capacities or characteristics of a handicapped person are primarily related to the handicap; actions or words that reflect such a belief.

## Racism :

the belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities; actions or statements that reflect such a belief.

## Sexism :

the belief that sex is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities other than biological reproduction; actions and statements that reflect such a belief.



# Pioneers (From p. 1)

Besides Sarah she had another daughter, Addie, who in the 1880's began to work as a laundress. Her eldest daughter, Esther, was married to John Foreman, a laborer who also came here in the 1860's, Chaudhuri said.

"Matilda Austin, who later became Matilda Austin Major, came from North Carolina and was never gainfully employed. She had three children, Richard, Drew, and Bell. Richard had a business in Kansas City and two of

*"Lives, activities and feelings of ordinary people are commonly overlooked and unrecorded. Oral history provides the means to study them. By recording private feelings, priorities, and values, oral history contributes to social history as it elicits the experiences of less recognized, less political, less vocal . . . lives of ordinary people."*

- Dr. Nupur Chaudhuri  
Project Director

his children were educated at Oberlin College. Bell married a school teacher and Drew went to the penitentiary," she said.

"With a population of about 100 people, it is obvious that a visible Black community, however small, existed in Manhattan before the 1879 'Black Exodus'," Chaudhuri said. "Available information does not shed much light on whether the Blacks lived in a segregated neighborhood or the families were scattered throughout the Manhattan community."

## Exodus

Throughout the 1870's there was a steady migration of the Afro-American from Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee to cities and towns in Kansas, the report said.

"This migration was an organized movement but, in 1879, the Black immigration to Kansas--including Manhattan--took a sharp turn," Chaudhuri said.

"In early 1879 some 6,000 Blacks from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas came to Kansas in the space of a few months. Their movements were unplanned and the mass migration was leaderless and, therefore, totally disorganized. This migration to Kansas is known as the 'Exodus', in reference to the feeling of these Afro-Americans that they were going to the 'Promised Lands'," Chaudhuri said.

Many of those coming to Kansas during the "Exodus" used the rivers for transportation and most of the Black refugees coming in boats preferred to land in Wyandotte, across the river from Kansas City, which was considered by them to be a sanctuary, she said.

"This town, with about 5,000 residents, was totally unprepared to receive this continuous stream of destitute migrants," Chaudhuri said. Tension began to mount and, on April 18, 1879, the Mayor of Wyandotte issued a proclamation threatening action on any steamboat line or transportation company that continued "importing destitute persons to our shores." By that time between 1,700 and 2,000 destitute Blacks were already in Wyandotte.

On April 21, when the steamboat Durfee arrived in Wyandotte with another 240 Black passengers, the captain was told he could not unload the passengers, the report said. Ultimately, a few days later, all of the passengers except one family were shipped off to Manhattan, Kansas.

"One of the Manhattan newspapers of the time, The Manhattan Enterprise, on May 2, 1879 described the coming of these Afro-Americans as follows:

As soon as it became known last Thursday that two carloads of Exodites had reached this place, they were visited by a large number of citizens of both sexes, all ages and colors. Being entirely destitute, active measures were at once taken for their relief. The whole number was removed to the old paper mill, where they are at present. The accommodations are not great, but there is good shelter from the weather.

"According to this newspaper there were 104 persons in the group and one had died since arrival. Thus, the number of Afro-Americans coming to Manhattan at the end of April 1879, as reported by the newspaper, is quite different from the account (of 240 passengers) mentioned in the Wyandotte account," Chaudhuri said.

"However, the 1879 migration of the Blacks to Manhattan caused a sharp increase in the number of Afro-Americans in this town. According to the 1880 census, while the total population of Manhattan was 2,105, the number of Black men, women, and children rose to 315," she said.

## Exodites and their Descendents

"Among the 23 Afro-American senior citizens interviewed for this project, at least 5 of them could trace their roots in Manhattan as far back as the 1880's to early 1900," Chaudhuri said.

"One respondent told us that her mother was a slave in Mississippi and had lived in Manhattan," she said. One interviewee stated: "My grandpa on my mama's side, he was a slave, but they did not come out from Tennessee, it took them a whole year to come through Illinois." Another descendent of a Black pioneer family said her grandmother from her mother's side was a slave and she believed that most of her family came from Tennessee "during the slavery times." According to one interviewee, her grandfather and his family came here in a covered wagon. The great-grandmother of one of the respondents was a slave in Kentucky and she, with her family, came here "during the time slaves were free," the report said.

In response to a question about why the families had chosen to come to Kansas, one answered: "They (her grandparents) did not know where they were going to camp. They finally said, just go to Kansas, so they made it to Kansas."

Another said: "They were white people that brought them up here to Kansas. That's the way I understood grandma, and it seemed like they worked for people, but yet and still they had their independence . . . the folks just brought her. Where they sharecroppers? I believe they were and they brought my grandmother."

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*(Editor's Note: The story of Manhattan's Black Community will continue in the next issue of Alliance. We are grateful to Dr. Chaudhuri for sharing this preliminary report with us.)*

# AWARD (From 1)

include it as one of the final nominees and the novel became a surprisingly clear favorite."

The scales were tipped in Erdrich's favor, Diehl writes, because "The unusual subject matter of contemporary American Indian life is appealing, and Erdrich has written skillfully about this subject with compelling emotional intensity. She tells these moving and humorous stories of domestic life among a disenfranchised people with many narrative voices in what seems at times like a sequence of connected short stories. But it is the freshness of her vision, the

originality of her phrases that attracted the NBCC board."

The New York Times review said: "There are at least a dozen of the many vividly drawn people in this first novel who will not leave the mind once they are let in. Their power comes from Erdrich's mastery of words. It draws you quickly into their world, a place of poor shacks stuck amid the wrecks of old cars and other junk made beautiful in Erdrich's evocation."

Erdrich's first published work, a poetry collection entitled Jacklight, was published in 1983 by Holt-Rinehart-Winston, who also publish Love Medicine. ("The American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts," February 1985.)

# BOOKS TO KSU FROM BROOKS

Gwendolyn Brooks gave five books to the students of Kansas State University when she visited here in January. Anyone wanting to take a look at them may do so in the Office of Minority Affairs, 201 Holton Hall.

Very Young Poets is written for just who the title suggests: very young children who want to write poetry. Needless to say, poets of all ages may have lots to learn from Brooks' lessons. "Be brave!" she said. "On your paper, write what is true."

Another of the books, Aloneness, is also written and illu-

*Sometimes  
I think it is not possible  
to be alone.*



*You are with you.*

Aloneness

strated for young children. It is about the difference between aloneness and loneliness.

Young Poet's Primer is a book of writing lessons for high school-and college-age writers. In it Brooks related that during visits to elementary schools she is often asked, "What is poetry?" "Poetry, I answer frequently, is what poets write," she said. "And a poet is a person who distils experience, then crystallizes. The crystals may then be held familiarly in the hand. Prose endeavors to say very much about a thing; poetry is at pains to select -- poetry selects with agonized care. Prose is survey; poetry is siren. Poetry is beauty, or music, or condensed thought -- or all of these at once -- drawn from, molded out of, human experience."

Brooks said she asked her daughter what she thought poetry was. Now the founder-director of Anchor, an Arts Organization for Children, the then thirteen-year-old girl said: "I think that poetry is that quality which enables us to see clearly light, joy, gaiety, sorrow, sadness. It is that quality which

we need most in the world, because without it we would not really know what the world is."

Primer for Blacks is a small book containing what Brooks called "Three Preachments." Two are poems: "Primer for Blacks" ("Blackness is a title/ is a preoccupation, is a commitment...") and "To Those Of My Sisters Who Kept Their Naturals," subtitle "Never to look a hot comb in the teeth." And one is a prose piece called "Requiem Before Revival."

Becokonings is a short volume of poetry.

# McCULLERS

One review of Carson McCullers and her works said McCullers was "an explorer of the Southern grotesque." No matter the stated geographical locale, it said, her environment was always Southern. And McCullers wrote about people this review called "grotesque," but grotesque in the sense of "outsider" rather than the freakish or absurd.

Carson McCullers wrote about solitary and often lonely outsiders. And she wrote about them with such sensitivity that it is said her "compassion for the disaffiliated" was so deep that she was their foremost spokesperson in modern American literature. One reviewer said McCullers spoke for "all the lonely and alienated people in the world."

An article referring to the portrayal of Blacks by William Faulkner and Carson McCullers in the February issue of Alliance quoted a speaker at a recent meeting of the Modern Language Association who said McCullers' work better avoided racial stereotypes than all writers of the Southern renaissance literary period, including Faulkner. R. L. Smith, assistant professor of English at Williams College, said McCullers presented Southern Black life more accurately than Faulkner.

Referring to McCullers' The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, Smith said the author "sees social differences as a result of personal and collective experiences, not as an innate entailment of racial character."

This commitment, he said, "frees her from the strictures of Old South thinking and allow her to portray depths of character which were necessarily inconceivable to Old South writers."

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter (1940), McCullers best known work, offers a good illustration of the alienated, outsider characters she selected to portray. The Heart is the story of a deaf-mute named John Singer to whom heartfelt secrets are confided by a series of people: Jake Blount, an embittered radical; Benedict Mady Copeland, a disillusioned Black doctor; Biff Brannon, a (what the review called) sexually ambivalent restaurant owner; and Mick Kelly, a twelve-year-old tomboy.

Another of McCullers novels, Reflections in a Golden Eye (1941), is a tale about bisexuality (both McCullers and her husband were bisexual); and another, The Member of the Wedding (1946), has as its central characters an "awkward, motherless, twelve-year-old" girl living in a small Southern town, and Bernice Sadie Brown, an "earthy, eloquent Black housekeeper." Both Reflections and The Member involve the theme of loneliness, alination and the absence of reciprocity in human relationships.

McCullers did not write happily-ever-after books. She explored the ramifications of being left out.

Bernice Sadie Brown, the strong Black woman played by Ethel Walters in the stage production of "The Member of the Wedding," for example, "knows loneliness as fundamental and inescapable. She has had four marriages, three of them loveless, and she is a black woman in a white world."

A second theme in The Member confronts the issue a racial prejudice directly through the bitter violence in Bernice's foster brother, Henry Camden Brown.

The director of "The Member of the Wedding" identified the plays central action as a "struggle for connection." Perhaps that struggle best describes all of Carson McCullers' works.

McCullers was born Lula Carson Smith in Columbus, Georgia. At seventeen she traveled alone to New York where she studied at Columbia and New York Universities. She published her first story in 1936, at age nineteen.

As a teenager, McCullers admired the work of Eugene O'Neill and it was his work that inspired her first play which she described as "a three-actor about revenge and incest." Her next effort was "a two-character play entitled 'The Fire of Life,' in which Jesus Christ and Nietzsche confronted each other speaking rhymed verse."

McCullers was married twice to Reeves McCullers and, although they were lifelong friends, they lived together only sporadically. McCullers spent most of her time with other writers and creative people and died in 1967.





Every one of us gets bored now and then. On the other hand, our lives sometimes feel so hectic that spending the weekend in a sensory deprivation tank would seem too exciting. We hear about "stress-related" illness more now than ever before. The odd thing is, even in the midst of the busiest of schedules, it is still possible to feel apathetic and uninterested.

Maybe January and February were just too cold and bleak this year. I have a friend - a friend who would be included on even the world's shortest list of healthy, well-adjusted people - who has commented more than once this winter that her life was full and busy; she liked her job, she liked her family, she even enjoyed all of the activities in which she was involved. But, she was bored! She felt a little ashamed of the bored feelings because "things were going along just fine." But she recognized how she felt - and she felt bored.

I don't have a solution for the problem of needing to spice up one's life from time to time, even when you are supposedly "set." I do know that it is a normal dilemma and one that is part of the pull between order (sameness) and disorder (change) within the entire universe. It is a natural phenomenon, like gravity, and the only "solution" for handling it within our lives is balance.

Likewise, some theorists believe there are two fundamental sources of human satisfaction, both also having to do with change. One is stimulation - excitement, novelty, uniqueness, change; and one is relief - sameness, security, stability, familiarity, nonchange. People are drawn to that which is changing, for stimulation. We change everything from the furniture to our jobs to our minds. And there is an equally strong urge for security, sameness, predictability - to create "order out of chaos."

The balance of these qualities is, to me, one of the wonders of the world; in fact, it is a so-called

"Law" of the universe (The Second Law of Thermodynamics) - and one that, at least within our ordinary reality, seems to work. It has to do with the way in which energy is used, and what I like about it is that this physical law (skeptically applied) illuminates a pattern that can help explain so many other things. As human beings, we deal with this need to balance certainty and uncertainty in everything from personal psychology to particle physics.

The pattern (the Second Law) addresses the way the universe is poised between "entropy," the tendency for all things to move toward randomness and disorder; and "redundancy," the fight for control or organization. Everything, EVERYTHING plays along this balance between order and disorder.

We shouldn't jump to the conclusion that order is good and disorder is bad, however. The fact that, within the closed system we call our universe, there is such phenomenon as entropy is as important to existence as wind is to sailing. Entropy is what makes the seasons, and time itself, go along in sequence; it maintains what we

view as a linear process "forward" (even if it is toward disorder). It means freedom. So, although language, culture, organization, life, itself, are order-producing elements within the universe, total redundancy would mean an absence of anything moving anywhere at all, a void and death.

Music offers a good example of entropy and redundancy. If a song is repeated ta-dum-ta-dum-ta-dum, over and over and over, it would be too redundant for ears used to hearing a progression "forward" and we would become bored. But, if the song were too disorganized, if the entropy were too high, it would frustrate and irritate us because some repetition is necessary to make sense out of things. Jazz has higher entropy than "Row, Row,

Row Your Boat." A composer's goal is to play along the line just close enough to keep people from going to sleep without making them pull their hair out from too many random, disconnected notes.

Language works on this same principle. The English language is slightly less than fifty percent redundant. People who study language know, for example, that the letter "e" is the most often used letter. As in life, there are lots of these kinds of patterns within a language and, because of them we have a way to communicate that is predictable enough to be understood and yet flexible enough to change with our environment. If English were, say, only twenty percent redundant no one would be able to do a crossword puzzle; there would be too little predictability. If it were seventy percent redundant, we could all do the New York Times puzzle every day.

In the same way, if our lives become too redundant they can be tiresomely predictable, and boring. But we need to be careful to maintain the balance.

Each of us seems to prefer living at a different place along a continuum from relatively high entropy to relatively high redundancy, depending on things like cultural expectations, age, experience, and so forth. And, we may like a high degree of sameness in one part of our life and lots of changes in others; also, these needs and tolerances vary throughout a lifetime.

My sister, for example, can tolerate more physical disorder than I can; I seem to need more things in place around me. On the other hand, I may change jobs or move around the world without the stress she would experience. Talk about redundant: millions of people (many of whom work in high entropy environments) like to relax by watching "Dallas" on Friday nights, even though it is basically the same

story over and over; other people (who may be looking for stimulation instead of relief on Friday nights) think "Dallas" is about as exciting as watching food revolve in the microwave (something my cat, Chutney, who loves redundancy, finds fascinating).

The point of all this is that in our day-to-day lives we balance change and nonchange. When we're

bored we seek stimulation and when we're uncertain we want relief. My friend may be feeling bored, then, not because there is anything "wrong" in her life but rather because everything is going along so smoothly.

A note of caution is needed here: simply "stirring up trouble" to add excitement to life or floating in the deprivation tank forever to find security could be as foolhardy as wishing for either a hurricane or the doldrums on a sailing trip. The key is balance.

It could be said that the "art" of being a good composer or editor or manager of any kind - not to mention just living your life - consists to a significant degree of striking the right balance between predictability and uncertainty (between control/freedom, preservation/destruction, order/disorder, stability/spontaneity, whatever words fit your situation) - right balance being your best combination of satisfied anticipation and surprise.

The challenge to find, in our days, jobs, governments, marriages, music, minds - lives - a stability that is not too confining and a variety that is not too chaotic - to reach a balance that allows both rest and growth - is so common it is almost a cliché.

The best advice I've read about recapturing balance from the snare of boredom comes from one of humanity's wisest of wizards, Merlyn the magician, in the T.H. White "Camelot" story, The Once and Future

King. He called it sadness, but what he said applies to boredom:

"The best thing for being sad," replied Merlyn, beginning to puff and blow, "is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then - to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you. Look at what a lot of things there are to learn - pure science, the only purity there is. You can learn astronomy in a lifetime, natural history in three, literature in six. And then, after you have exhausted a milliard lifetimes in biology and medicine and theocriticism and geography and history and economics - why, you can start to make a cartwheel out of the appropriate wood, or spend fifty years learning to begin to learn to beat your adversary at fencing. After that you can start again on mathematics, until it is time to learn to plough."

Spring will help, too.

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## NOTES:

**SUMMER SCHOOL IN PUERTO RICO:** The University of the Sacred Heart (Universidad del Sagrado Corazon) in Santurce, Puerto Rico has announced its Summer Program in Puerto Rico. Last summer students from over 150 different universities and colleges attended one of the two one-month programs. Classes are offered primarily in Spanish. For further information write: Admissions, University of the Sacred Heart, PO Box 12383, Loiza Station, Santurce, Puerto Rico 00914 (809-727-7880). A catalog of courses may be seen in the Office of Minority Affairs, Holton Hall (see Deborah Boone).

### SUMMER JOBS IN AGRICULTURE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced openings for seasonal workers in the Manhattan area. Jobs run from May 28 to mid- to late August. Sixty percent of the work will be weeding test plots and seed production fields south of Manhattan at the Soil Conservation facility. The expected pay scale is from \$4.47 - \$5.03 per hour, 35-40 hours per week. Need own transportation. If interested call Plant Materials Center (539-8761) to request an interview.

### Physics Awards

The American Physical Society Committee on Minorities in Physics, in collaboration with the Corporate Associates of the American Institute of Physics, has organized a scholarship program for minority undergraduate students in physics to be sponsored by U.S. industrial corporations. The purpose of the program is to make a significant increase in the level of minority participation in physics in this country. Any Black, Hispanic, or Native American U.S. citizen who plans to major in physics and who is a high school senior or college freshman or sophomore may apply. Scholarships are for \$2,000 and may be renewed. For an application form and more information contact in the Office of Minority Affairs, 201 Holton Hall. Applications are due March 31, 1985. (Information may also be obtained by writing: APS Committee on Minorities, Scholarship Program, 335 E. 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.)



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