

# RUBICON

A JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE





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“Had I only understood it for what it was then, into this circular and self-serving set of assumptions I might have interjected some statement of my right to question why *any* text is revered and my need to know what it tells us about “how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, and how our language has trapped as well as liberated us””.

Annette Kolodny, *Dancing through the minefield* (Feminist Studies, Spring 1980)  
And Adrienne Rich, *When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision* (College English 34 no. 1, October, 1972).

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## RUBICON

Is an independent publication of the Kennesaw American Studies Alliance (KASA). We hope to bring a broader stage to American Studies writers, visual artists, and other creative workers, to publish editorial material that contributes to American Studies and introduces it to wider communities, and to interrogate the nature of cultures, ideas, people, and the interaction of the three in the Americas.

We publish the work of the American Studies community in the Kennesaw, Georgia area, which includes students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Kennesaw State University as well as anyone interested in American Studies. We will accept submissions of material on subjects related to American Studies and social change for consideration at [www.kennesawamericanstudies.net](http://www.kennesawamericanstudies.net). We reserve the right to accept or reject any submissions without restriction. Material submitted cannot be returned.

The ideas and opinions expressed herein are entirely those of the authors and editors and not of any particular institution or group. Responsibility for the publication rests with KASA. We are working to publish emerging writers along with established ones, to challenge accepted interpretations of culture and society, and to provide space for exploration and inquiry on subjects that often do not have easy answers. If you're interested, offended, or intrigued by something you read here, let us know at [www.kennesawamericanstudies.net](http://www.kennesawamericanstudies.net).

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### Reflections on Southern Identity

Jessica Killcreas (English, AS minor)  
[Written for Dr. Yow's American Studies  
“(Re) constructing Southern identity in  
the Post-Millennial South].”

I have lived in the South my entire life, along with my family; the majority of which has also lived in the south for decades. I have known Wild Man, and his unwillingness to allow blacks in his Civil War memorabilia store. I've known friends of my father who participated openly in KKK rallies, and family rules that forbade the dating of black men. I've known potluck Sunday lunches at the church, and baptisms at the lake. I know trailer parks, broke down cars, and having to sell off cows to pay for the tractor. I know you bring food when there's going to be a funeral, I know how to season a skillet, and I know that it's polite to ask about someone's health, but only if you have time to hear every calamity that ever struck the family tree. What I didn't know

was that this is not just a part of my identity, but a part of the regional identity of the American South.

The history of this region is ingrained in its people. Whether natives of the South or transplants, most people are aware of the stereotypes that Southerners have. However, as we've seen in our readings this semester, the South has not constructed its identity around stereotypes. We started with a look at [Gone With the Wind](#), presenting the typi-

“I know you bring food when there's going to be a funeral, I know how to season a skillet, and I know that it's polite to ask about someone's health, but only if you have time to hear every calamity that ever struck the family tree.”

cal antebellum glory of a Southern Utopia. We then saw Alice in Octavia E. Butler's [Kindred](#) commit the ultimate form of resistance against power. We've seen Pearl and other characters in E. L. Doctorow's [The March](#) build new lives from the burnt wreckage of the old. Nat Turner informed us that history is written by the

powerful, and that success can only be measured against time. Grace Hale enlightened our class on the conflicting instances of segregated integration, and opened our eyes to the brutality of Southerners intent on keeping their old ways of life. James Baldwin showed our class how violence could be perpetrated by generation after generation, and how bittersweet the division between hatred and desire. In Carol Stack's [Call to Home](#), we watched as people tried to come together and create a new home in a New South that they could help construct, a place so seemingly broken that it held potential for complete redesign.

In our readings, and in the oral history assignment, it has become obvious that Southerners hold a shared Southern identity. It is one built up from manners, respectability, resistance, racial divisions, economic struggle, religion, work, and resilience. The legacy of the South is one filled with conflict and the hope for an ideal life in a region filled with potential.

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**There Goes the Neighborhood: A look at Minorities in America's Suburbs**  
*by Nikkeshia Wilson (KSU Senior, Modern Language and Culture)*

"There goes the neighborhood" is a typical suburban comment that signifies discontent with whoever may live nearby, most often in regards to a new family that has moved into the community. Sheryl Crow uses the term as a hook in one of her songs that discusses a party in someone's neighborhood (Crow 1998). Country singer Shania Twain used it to describe people moving out of the neighborhood (Twain 1993). Body Count, a rap-heavy metal group, uses the statement in their song that talks about "niggas" who play rock and apparently do not comprehend that "rock is for white people" (Body Count 1992). Country singer Gretchen Wilson sings a song by the same name in which she talks about packing up her trailer, chickens and cows to move into town (Wilson 2007). The phrase signifies various things, but the idea is the same: something is changing about the place in which we live.

The suburban segregation mentality has occurred since the very beginning of suburbia. The first American suburb was constructed by William Levitt in Levittown, Pennsylvania, in the 1950s, as an affordable housing alternative for whites. Black families were not allowed. Levitt feared that if he sold to blacks, whites would not purchase the homes. He defended his actions in 1954 by stating that he was Jewish and therefore incapable of feeling racism, but that he had "come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then 90 to 95 percent of our white customers will not buy into the community" (Blackwell 2007). When a black family purchased a home in Levittown in 1957, they were received with racist epithets, bomb threats, and rocks. Despite the change in times and widespread desegregation, Levittown was still only 1.5 percent black in July 2007. Possibly the wide coverage of Levittown by the media in the 1950s and the fact that the area was resistant to blacks causes blacks to avoid moving into that area today.

A 2007 article about diversity in *the Toledo Blade* stated in that "Predominantly white suburbs are nothing new. Since they became an American institution in the 1950s, suburbs have been a product of white middle-class flight from urban centers, in large part to create communities where tax dollars could support better public services -- mainly schools" (Alexander-Bloch 2007). The Census Bureau 2005 Community Survey states that of the 285,937 inhabitants in Toledo, 189,641 (66%) are white and 72,657 (25%) are black (US Census Bureau 2007). There is a predominantly white population but large areas are predominately black.

My husband's family lives in Toledo,

**"racism is a serious problem . . . there is a substantial difference between the 'white areas' of town and those which are not."**

in a current example of suburbia. It's interesting to discuss racism with the family when we visit. The area in which they live is predominantly black. They are blacks who believe that racism manifests itself in the condition of the roads. Although some have been repaved in recent years, it appears that repairs are occurring more in certain areas of town and not others. Members of the family mention that racism is a serious problem in Toledo and that there is a substantial difference between the 'white areas' of town and those which are not.

An article in the Arkansas Times reports a black couple involved in a lawsuit at this moment regarding an incident with their white neighbor. Apparently the neighbor felt she was performing an act of goodwill when she sent a note to the couple telling them to "act white not like niggers," to "keep [their] children contained in [their] house and not hanging in the street like gangs," and that they "really hurt the property value of the neighborhood." The neighbor signed the letter "concerned people in the country club" (Williams 2007). The newspaper set up the ability for readers to post comments, and while some support the neighbor, others are disgusted. The generalizations of the letter are difficult to forget, particularly because my multira-

cial family and I have lived in white suburbs since I began elementary school.

Blacks who purchase homes are not the only ones who experience prejudice in suburbia. *A Death in Belmont* tells the story of three people involved in one of the murders associated with the Boston Strangler of the early-to-mid-1960s. The white community scrutinized a black man named Roy Smith, who was in Belmont to clean Bessie Goldberg's house for a party later that evening. Once his job was done, Smith walked through town, purchased cigarettes at the pharmacy, and continued to the bus station to return to Boston. Later, Goldberg's husband Israel found her robbed, raped and murdered. Immediately, everyone recalled the strange 'nigger' that had walked down the street (Junger 2006).

The author of *A Death in Belmont* makes the point that "Belmont was a sophisticated town where few people would openly say anything racist, but that didn't mean they weren't thinking that way" (Junger 2006). Some had in fact been thinking that way, because the black man was later arrested and convicted of the crime with no physical evidence. The one witness that was willing to disclose his racist thoughts was a business owner named Louis Pizzuto. During the cross examination of the witness in court, Pizzuto stated,

"I said, 'Did a colored fellow come into the store?'..."

"Did you say 'colored fellow,?'" [asks the defense attorney]...

"I might have said 'negro.'"

"You might have said 'negro.' Did you say 'nigger'?"

"Well, I might have said 'nigger.'" (Junger 2006).

The truth is that the citizens of Belmont that saw Smith walk down the street were nervous. They wondered what a black man was doing there. When Mrs. Goldberg was found dead, everyone was bound to think about the black guy. He was out of place. He was different. Children playing ball outside of the Goldbergs' home, Pizzuto, the clerk at the pharmacy, and the other witnesses that remembered Roy had a reason to remember him.



The issue is not that the suburbanites noticed the black man walking around their white town. Any observant person will remember the one person walking through town that is different or out of the norm. However, Roy Smith was found guilty of Mrs. Goldberg's rape, robbery and murder despite the lack of any direct evidence by, "... [The] all-male jury...[and the] all-white jury—the result not of racism but of the fact that jurors were drawn from voter lists" (Junger 2006). The citizen voters of Belmont were white and male and many had a bias against blacks. The details described by Junger throughout the text work to clear Smith's name. He concludes the text with two chapters stating why he believes Roy Smith to be innocent. The culprit that he believes may have committed the crime is a white man. The significance of the conviction of Roy Smith is that he was out of place in Belmont. The suburbanites sacrificed diversity and multiculturalism for sameness, which they associated with safety.

The issues of blacks in the suburbs were also seen in the 1970s. A March 1971 Time magazine article states that "Whites, some of whom possibly ascribe to neighbors prejudices that they would not admit to in themselves, feel strongly (67% to 12%) that most others in the community would be against blacks moving in. By 59% to 26%, they think the advent of blacks would hurt real estate values. Suburbanites favor integrated schools, but only on a limited basis. They prefer neighborhood schools and oppose having blacks bused in from other dis-

tricts by nearly 3 to 1; even teenagers agree" (Suburbia: The New American Plurality 1971). Suburbanites admitted that they felt endangered when blacks moved into their neighborhoods and the idea that home value was dependent on the neighbors also continued. Both mentalities may have been passed through the generations, as represented by the suburban youth opinions. I doubt that those feelings have not been passed down through the generations of suburbanites today. Although the suburbs have since changed with the emergence of blacks in white neighborhoods, Latinos have become the population of focus, often suspected of bringing danger and unwanted activities to the safe haven of the suburbs.

The influx of Latino migrants is a common subject today, not only because of the political issues surrounding their legality but also because they are living in the suburbs, and are moving their culture in with them. A coworker of mine once said that she "really didn't mind Mexicans," but she couldn't handle the fact there were so many of them in one house, that they had a surplus of cars parked in the driveway, and that they played their loud music frequently and late into the night. A 2006 USA Today article states that although suburban counties were at one time "the bastion of white America," minorities are moving in,

**"The suburbanites sacrificed diversity and multiculturalism for sameness, which they associated with safety."**

causing these areas to be more significantly "multicultural ... Atlanta suburbs in counties such as Gwinnett, Clayton and Cobb had some of the largest gains among blacks" (Nasser 2006). According to the article, the growth in suburbs can be attributed to immigration of Latinos and Asians as well.

I grew up in the suburbs of Norcross, Gwinnett County, Georgia, in the Berkmar High School cluster. We moved before I started kindergarten and lived in that house in the cul-de-sac until the end of my fifth grade year. During those 6 years, my father painted rooms, cleared out the back yard, built a swing set, and repainted the house. I have missed that house over the years and have driven

through the neighborhood a few times to show friends where I grew up and to satisfy my own curiosity. The last time that I visited my old house, it was a bright shade of peachy-pink! I have to admit that my first thought was that the black family that my parents sold the house to must have moved out and sold the house to a Mexican family. I was ashamed of my ungrounded conclusion, because I take pride in the mix of races. I am a mulatto, and when I lived in the neighborhood there seemed to be a "little bit of everything." Of the seven houses that make up the cul-de-sac, three of the families were minorities and the other four families were white. After we moved, we still attended the church that is located at the main street, and could tell that the community behind the church was changing by the visitors on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, and due to the participants in the outreach activities. Over the years, their most common race changed from white, to black, and finally to Latino.

The website of my former elementary school, Rebecca Minor Elementary, which serves the Norcross area, notes the change in the racial demographic by stating that, "[the] community entered a period of transition during the 1990's, which resulted in increased mobility as well as ethnic and economic diversity." They go on to discuss the "diverse and transient nature" of the student body (Gwinnett County Public Schools 2007). The Gwinnett County Public School's "About Us" website states that as of November 2005, 42.4% of the population was white, 25.1% was African-American, 19% Hispanic, 10% Asian American and 3.5% was Other (Gwinnett County Public Schools 2007). B.B. Harris is an elementary school located in Duluth, about 10 miles away from Rebecca Minor Elementary; a school website states that the schools demographics have changed and currently boasts a student population that is 32% Caucasian, 18% black, 29% Hispanic, 19% Asian and 5% multi-racial (Gwinnett County Public Schools 2007). The percentages show a significant increase in the Hispanic population, a smaller percent of the Caucasian population, and a lesser percentage of Asians. Although the two data sets represent the

County as a whole and one of its schools respectively, and in different years, they suggest that the demographics are changing and that Gwinnett County, in particular, has seen an increase in Latino population.

Children's author and storyteller Carmen Agra Deedy tells about her experiences as a Cuban immigrant in the suburbs of DeKalb County in *Growing up Cuban in Decatur, Georgia*. She states that "English-speaking Americans often become frustrated, even indignant when new American immigrants can't or won't speak the English language." She goes on to mention that language of origin is often the only tie that these inhabitants have to their home country. First generation immigrants experience prejudice even from their second-generation immigrant children. Therefore, in their defense, the loud music and the brightly painted homes are other ways for Latinos, and particularly Mexicans, to feel more at home in their new dwellings here in the states (Deedy 1995).

Many people argue that Spanish-speaking persons living in the U.S. need to assimilate to American culture. Others rebuke the mentality of that argument by stressing that like many of our ancestors, these groups are migrating to America and moving to the suburbs to fulfill the "American Dream" of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as stated in our Declaration of Independence. A radio broadcast aired June 22, 2005 by National Public Radio (NPR) addresses this issue. Called *Working toward Whiteness*, based on a book by David R Roediger, the audio recording discusses the integration of immigrants into US society, as well as the history of the issue. In the early 1900s, exclusion acts plagued all minorities. Blacks were being killed, Mexicans were deported, and Japanese were without rights to integrate. The "melting pot" of America was in a rocky state. In the same period, there were large numbers of Irish, Polish and Italian immigrants. Their options were either to assimilate or to form small ethnic communities, and the same holds true today. Some Latinos have chosen to become part of the majority-white Ameri-

can society while others have created small communities (*Working Toward Whiteness* 2005). Buford Highway in Atlanta, for example, displays a lot of Latino culture. On the 'What is Buford Highway?' page of The Buford Highway Project's website, they describe Buford Highway as a "multi-ethnic community." It goes on to say that Atlanta is experiencing an abundance of new immigrants who are "going straight to the suburbs; where housing and commercial real estate more closely resembles (sic) affordability and where many [second] generation immigrant communities have al-

**"It all comes down to accepting the fact that the ethnicity of the suburbs cannot be controlled . . ."**

ready relocated" (*What is Buford Highway?* 2007). In all of this, we can conclude many things about the suburbs.

First, the suburbs began as an all white entity in which white Americans could flee the conditions of urban and/or rural America. We can also conclude that minorities have been treated as second-class citizens and as a result, have been ostracized and forbidden access, in some cases, from the suburbs. This was evident in the policies of Levittown and in the more recent examples from Arkansas and Ohio. The populations of suburbs are on the rise, but as they've grown, they have become multi-cultural. We can also state that although some suburbanites complain about "who lives next door," movement to the suburbs by blacks, and Latinos, was and still is inevitable. It all comes down to accepting the fact that the ethnicity of the suburbs cannot be controlled; meaning that it is almost impossible to prevent other ethnicities from moving into your neighborhood. Instead of being upset and selling one's house, or sending hateful letters, in order to avert the unwanted minority neighbors, those prejudiced persons should accept the fact that, "there goes the neighborhood..."

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Where a fellow can start on the home team and wind up in the big league. Where there is always room at the top for the fellow who has it on the ball + This is your America!

... Keep it Free!

## Why American Studies at KSU?

American Studies is an interdisciplinary discipline that examines American cultures in breadth and depth. It draws heavily from the traditional fields of English and history, but also includes the perspectives of gender and women's studies, sociology, philosophy, anthropology and political science. Although American Studies has been a program of study in American universities since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it has received increased attention in the past fifteen years. Universities have recognized the importance of developing more interdisciplinary studies programs in order to provide students with a richer learning experience that allows them to benefit from different perspectives when examining complex societal issues such as race, identity, urbanization, immigration, gender roles, and American popular culture. The discipline is grounded in scientific research but seeks areas in society for

the concrete applications of the findings. As KSU becomes a major, comprehensive university, it is only natural to offer our students the opportunity to take part in this exciting endeavor. Thanks to the dedication of our highly accomplished faculty led by Drs. Sarah Robbins and LeeAnn Lands, KSU currently offers a

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minor in American Studies, housed in the Dean's Office of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and is awaiting approval of a Master of Arts program. Recognizing that global learning is essential for students to be successful in their professional and personal lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, KSU just embarked on a

five year plan to emphasize “Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship” (see <http://www.kennesaw.edu/getglobal>)-- a program closely related to the field of American Studies. Students majoring in the humanities and the social sciences, and also those majoring in education, business, nursing, or almost any other discipline would greatly benefit from a minor in American Studies. In addition to being a rewarding academic experience, a minor in American Studies can make a difference when applying for a job because employers seek applicants who understand the complexities of the American culture locally, nationally, and trans-nationally; and interact effectively with people from different backgrounds.

Thierry Léger  
Associate Dean, College of Humanities and Social sciences



## BROTHERHOOD WEEK

FEBRUARY 19th to 28th, 1943

We are fighting for the right of men to live together as members of one family rather than as masters and slaves. We are fighting that the spirit of brotherhood which we prize in this country may be practiced here and by free men everywhere. It is our promise to extend such brotherhood earthwide which gives hope to all the world. The war makes the appeal of Brotherhood Week stronger than ever.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

## SOCIAL CHANGE NEWS

*This section of Rubicon will carry news, announcements, and critical writing on community issues, social change projects and activism, student and other KSU group efforts, justice advocacy, and the human questions that affect us all.*

-Know all the Facts—Be Involved—Speak Out! -ed

In November '07, Filmmaker and diversity trainer Li Mun Wah conducted a workshop at KSU entitled "Walking Each Other Home." In an unusual format that emphasized the contrived and illogical nature of group prejudice as well as the endemic proportions of it in our everyday lives, Mun Wah proposed an alternative mindset that sees all of us as newcomers



in a sense, recognizing the depth and value of personal and cultural identities rather than applying a colorblind political correctness.

Mun Wah's films, including the recent "Color of Fear," have contributed to the dialogue on the social realities of prejudice and the experience of otherness in American society. His seminars are used by numerous universities and corporations to bring the discussion of real, daily life diversity and tolerance to the surface.

Civil Rights leader Dr. Diane Nash spoke at KSU in summer '07, presenting a workshop titled "The Nonviolent Movement of the 1960s: A Legacy for Today." Nash,



who led lunch counter sit-ins and organized Freedom Rides working with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, recounted the philosophy of non-

violent resistance that King adapted from the work of Mohandas Gandhi and instilled in the Civil Rights work of the 1960's. She challenged current activists and citizens to stop accepting situations that they know are unjust, and to embrace the concept of fighting actions and situations rather than people.

On January 26th, 2008, A World Social Forum Global Day of Action, a group from KASA will join the Georgia Citizen's Coalition on Hunger in a Poor People's Caravan in Downtown Atlanta, a rally at the Capitol and the first ever Poor People's Movement Assembly. This effort will raise community awareness of poverty in the United States, and how much the gap has grown in past years; how many people, not only the unemployed but many working long hours, do not have the means for adequate food and safe shelter for themselves and their families; how many are unable to reach their potential because they are trapped in a new and more pervasive web of obstructions to socioeconomic mobility that disregards the standard of fair pay for a hard day's work.

Join us—[www.americanstudies.net](http://www.americanstudies.net).

Members of KSU's Campus Greens Party joined the protest at the School of the Americas (SOA, now renamed WHINSEC) At Fort Benning, Georgia, on November 19th, 2007. The SOA trains members of foreign militaries and paramilitary groups on tactical warfare and specific US-provided weapons methods. Critics claim that SOA graduates are responsible for many of the worst human rights violations in Latin America, including thousands of civilian deaths. Eric Pierce, Ashley DiBelardino, and Matthew Boynton employed a nonviolent resistance tactic in challenging the "stick law," a local ordinance enacted to prevent protesters from carrying signs or crosses of any useful size by classifying them as dangerous



sticks. The three students carried crosses bearing the names of noncombatant civilians who were allegedly killed by SOA trainees, requesting to be allowed to place them on the lawn in front of the facility. When they respectfully declined to leave the area, they were arrested for obstructing an officer (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9HoDyrY8a0>). This will bring the issue to a public court, where attorneys from the School Of the Americas Watch (SOAW) organization will be able to openly challenge the actual motivations of the law and its constitutionality relative to the restriction of free speech.



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## The Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship

by Dr. Nina Y. Morgan  
Sept. 27th, 2007

If the words “Casablanca” and “Morocco” conjure up romantic visions of secret pasts, mysterious papers and international liaisons, your imagination is right on target for what’s going on here at KSU, where the American Studies program is going Moroccan. If it’s not a secret to you that Morocco was the first country in the world to formally recognize the USA in 1777, you might be the perfect American Studies student; most people do not know anything about our long, fruitful relationship with Morocco, where our first “property” outside the USA still exists today, a gift to the USA at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For one week in October, Dr. Sarah Robbins, Dean Rich Vengroff and I will travel together to Casablanca in order to give papers (that is, lectures) to students and faculty at Hassan II University, though our papers are not on mysterious topics: Dean Vengroff will speak about the current political climate in the USA; Dr. Robbins will discuss her research on American missionary women



Dr. Morgan with Dr. Amine Moumine, Director of American Studies at Hassan II Mohammedia University, Ben M'sik, Casablanca, Morocco

in Africa; and I will offer a talk on contemporary American popular culture. Heading into Morocco, however, cannot be just about lecturing. There’s a lot of friendship building to be done as academically-driven international relationships depend on basic human factors: an open heart and mind, shared experiences, and mutual respect. We plan to make friends while we are in Morocco, so we will be eating out, listening up and playing nice. We also plan to invite a Moroccan American Studies professor (and, hopefully, further down the line, some students) to come to KSU to meet us—

and you. Exchanges between the campuses—of students and faculty—are a real and exciting possibility. When I was in Morocco in February of this year, I had a wonderful time exploring the university, going shopping in the winding marketplace—the “Souk,” and, in a side trip to Marrakesh, learning how to ride a camel. It was great. Of course, there were many serious moments in that journey which included conversations about American

values and Arab ideals, about religious leaders and believers of all kinds, about men and women. When we speak the same language but come from different parts of the world, the conversations can go on all night! This Spring, you might find yourself in an “America in the World” course where a Moroccan professor lectures for a week or two. Don’t be surprised if your lecture turns into an academic liaison that finds you seated on a jet headed for Casablanca!

*Dr. Morgan traveled to Morocco in 2007 to promote academic exchanges and discuss new interactions between KSU and Hassan II University. We’ll have visitors here from Hassan II early in 2008. Several mutual projects are being discussed.*



“Honest—it’s temporary!”

*“Of all the gin joints, in all the towns, in all the world, she walks into mine.” -ed*

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## Education and Education Reform in South Africa

by Chavonne Stewart

“The common problem of miseducation that African people share includes the misrepresentation of our cultural heritage and the marginalization of contemporary African realities” (King 2005).

The ability to acquire knowledge is essential to our survival. We receive knowledge in many ways, beginning in the home before we even start formal

education. Our parents teach us to recognize objects, read, write, and the importance of family values and morals. Without this ground work, a nation can fall apart.

Before the European invasion, African countries were immersed in their own traditional educational systems. Diversity was an important theme within these systems, and the educational systems of these regions functioned according to local languages and cultures. However, the introduction of the Europeans destroyed the very context of African traditional education. Colonialism destroyed the intercultural systems that

made African countries function well. Europeans viewed the native systems as ineffective. Their goal was to deculturalize and “civilize the indigenous people” (King 2005). They believed that the current systems failed to meet the needs of the natives since African traditional education was not equivalent to that of the European world. This idea became especially prevalent in South Africa. In this paper, I will show how the deterioration of the African traditional education system, the lack of an adequate level of education, and an oppressive (colonially imposed?) national identity could have led to the total destruction of South Af-

rica. Changes, however, in the political mindset of the people opened the door for reform.

“The nations of Southern Africa, like those of other regions of Africa, are experiencing enormous socioeconomic and political problems that can be resolved by introducing fundamental reform in the educational system” (Mungazi and Walker 1997). To be able to have a strong and equitable system of education, a nation has to have a political system of equality. A political system that promotes oppression creates a failed educational system. The introduction of the colonial ideas of education resulted in underdevelopment, supporting selective groups and not the masses.

The lack of education results in a lack of economic progress. Usually, the more highly educated can come back to help others, but when that opportunity does not exist, the masses die, mentally more than physically.

South Africa, like many other southern nations, was engrossed in a system of oppression from the period of colonialism until the freeing of Nelson Mandela. After World War II, the blacks of South Africa were plunged into the oppression of apartheid. “The transformation of southern Africa, that region of Africa south of the equator, cannot be initiated without responding to the need for fundamental educational reform” (Mungazi and Walker 1997). The nation needed to reeducate those who believed in a system that oppressed individuals because of the color of their skin. The major institutions required significant evaluations and new institutions had to be initiated. Within the most important institution, the native political system of Africa, we see “the importance of the role of the individual in shaping the character of society” (Mungazi and Walker 1997). A first step toward change was to understand the conditions to which Africans had been subjected; many had lost their dignity and heritage. Another step to reform was to “make it possible for the educational process to allow students freedom of choice for course of study” (Mungazi and Walker 1997). The total process not only improved learning; in each country or na-

tion, citizens worked towards developing a better national system.

There were many institutions that needed improvement. The national institution can be viewed as the most important one. The national institution should be the voice for everyone, not just a select group. The importance in national development is “political integration, economic support, and national unity” (Mungazi and Walker 1997). National Unity eliminates the hegemonic idea of culture where there is a dominating ruling class. Cultural hegemony has been present in the United States and in Africa. The Anglican white American ruled since the beginnings of American

**“At that time, African Americans in the United States were beginning the Civil Rights movement. Ghana spoke against the injustices committed against American Blacks, and thus, finally, African Americans had a mother country that was on their side.”**

Culture. Their way of life and education was the foundation of American Society. Those who migrated to the United States whether by force or choice had to adopt Anglican American mindset. Those who were enslaved had no representation.

Let’s think about history; when people have a mother country, She can speak out against injustices to her people anywhere. For example, when Ghana



became independent, it had representation in the United Nations. At that time, African Americans in the United States were beginning the Civil Rights movement. Ghana spoke against the injustices committed against American Blacks, and thus, finally, African Americans had a mother country that was on their side. This was similar to the creation of Israel for the Jews; with a strong

national identity, “these institutions include efforts to ensure fundamental freedoms of the people, such as self-expression and the rights to be safe and secure, to participate in national politics, to earn a decent income, to have social associations, and to express freedom of religion” (Mungazi and Walker 1997). As a result of these various movements, the United States just like Africa would introduce new education programs to help minorities. Some of those programs were Head Start, M to M, and currently No Child Left Behind.

In South Africa during the period of Apartheid, freedom for blacks was non-existent. Antigovernment speech was punishable, for instance in the case of Nelson Mandela. “The character of southern Africa itself demands that nations initiate educational reform because that is one viable way of finding solutions to the problems of national development” (Mungazi and

Walker 1997). “The richness of South Africa’s cultural, linguistic, racial, and social diversity was used by apartheid policy for the purposes of distorted social engineering and separate development” (Beckham 2000). The main step of improving education is improving national development. South Africa experienced this with changes in leadership. After forty years of oppression, South Africa began to see the light at the end of the tunnel. While one might argue that there was a change in heart, others would agree that the new leadership by the late 1980s saw apartheid as negative for the economic system. Apartheid had gone over its boundaries, as noted; “Botha did not have the courage to face up to the reality that apartheid had gone too far” (Beckham 2000). Frederick de Klerk became president in 1987, and “he recognized the critical nature of the South African society, in its entirety, as a victim of apartheid” (Beckham 2000). By 1990, de Klerk believed that a change had to occur. That change would be the destruction of the evil system of apartheid; the political status quo of apartheid could not last. “de Klerk was to respond to the call to end apartheid by changing the system of education so that

a thrust for national development could be made based on principles requiring the nation's educational transformation" (Beckham 2000). First change was "to dismantle the Bantu Education Act of 1953" (Beckham 2000). However, de Klerk failed to do so right away, opening the doors of doubt amongst Africans. "Black people were still regarded as second-class citizens and foreigners in the land of their birth" (Beckham 2000). Eventually, the people of South Africa would begin to see peace. "The elections held in South Africa in April 1994 to end apartheid and de Klerk did make peace overtures toward the ANC and the other formerly outlawed political parties" (Beckham 2000).

After years of injustice, change can't happen overnight. "The one-party system of government that had been in place in most countries of this critical region of Africa must give a way to a multi-party democratic system as a prerequisite of social transformation and the thrust for regional and national development" (Beckham 2000). Democracy changed aspects of the original ideology; it allowed freedoms that many Africans had never possessed before. Fear was prevalent on both ends, fear of losing power by the Afrikaners and fear of returning to the old system of government by Africans. Educational reform was faced with an enormous task. "The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply reflecting what other generations have done, men and women who are creative, inventive, who are discoverers" (Mungazi and Walker 1997).

Although apartheid existed, ethnic diversity was very widespread. The new system of education had to take this

diversity into consideration during the revamping process. The revision needed to occur on both the elementary and higher levels of education. "In February 1995, the president established the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)" (Beckham 2000). Its goal was to research the system and give light to the "policy direction of the government." (Beckham 2000). "Higher education is presented in the context of policy process and higher education is defined as the learning programs that lead to the award of a qualification more advanced than that further education certificate on the National Qualifications framework, after seventeen years of schooling." (Beckham 2000). "The purpose of education is to prepare students to live and function efficiently in a changed social environment that allows them to be discoverers" (Mungazi and Walker 1997).

To be able to achieve a high level of success in education, South Africa would need the appropriate funding. In 1995-6, "public expenditure on higher education in South Africa amounted to 1.2 percent of gross domestic product" (Mungazi and Walker 1997). First and foremost, teachers need to have a concrete background of education. There was a need for a better ratio of teachers to students. To educate effectively, teachers should not have an overwhelming number of students; the ideal class size is 15 to 20 students per teacher. Further, the curriculum should embody traditions of all ethnic groups and have set standards of learning for math, science, and literature.

South Africa today is a promising nation. The education system is still evolving. Currently, South Africa is under a whole new approach to the system

known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (North and Zewotir 2006). The road to freedom has been a long one. Not only has South Africa broken the bondage of apartheid, but they have elected their first black leader. It had been over a century since a native African headed the government of South Africa. Change was inevitable because of the drive of the political factions who protested. The door to the future will remain open to all citizens of South Africa. Behind that door her citizens will have rights and equal opportunities, and freedom to speak against injustices.

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"I believe that E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* take place in the same barnyard."

Helen Louise Metz

The Fall 2007 crew of the Rubicon are:

Janie Mardis  
Dr. Dede Yow  
Chris Smith  
Dr. LeeAnn Lands  
Dr. Ed Chan and  
Caitlin McCannon

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*"Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life."*

*Rachel Carson*

**- FACTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND CHANGE -**

1. **The science on pollution, dumping, resource depletion, global warming, and climate change is confusing** and the issues are political and contentious. The media is full of extreme statements, many contradictory, and the economic impacts are so great that the arguments will go on and will get worse.
2. **Despite the endless debates, the obvious, indisputable evidence is enough** to make it clear that there are real problems that will affect our lives directly, and soon. Conservation and resource awareness are no longer idealistic or quaint—they are simply the sane responses to a dangerous situation.
3. **KSU has a real, potentially very effective recycling program.** There are grouped receptacles and recycling stations all over campus, and the facilities people are trained to get the materials to separation facilities. The school uses a legit recycling service that does get separated trash into genuine re-use channels, and it can make a huge difference in this community of 23,000 people!
4. **The University does believe in Environmentalism** and is willing to prioritize it (after all, we have that big globe with the Sierra Club guy on it). There are a lot of committed, concerned people among the students, staff, faculty, and administration. We may need one clear public statement of commitment from the President and the Deans, but the evidence suggests that they are concerned and dedicated to environmentalism. The system isn't perfect and it needs more work and public education; mistakes happen, the use instructions could be clearer, the results could be more publicized, and programs could be more accessible for materials like batteries, electronics, light bulbs, and organics (food waste has a tremendous potential for bioenergy and landfill reduction) - BUT - none of it works if **WE ALL — STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY—** don't use it!
5. **The greatest problem now** is that many people don't understand that the program is real, and they have not been informed enough on how to use it or why. Material that goes into the general trash WILL go to the landfill—it can only be sorted if it is recycled in the proper containers! There are groups working on public education programs; on reinforcing training for the facilities workers; and on innovating new and better recycling programs for other materials that we currently dump, but it all depends on people using the recycling system.

**THE BOTTOM LINE IS - WE ALL HAVE TO TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY AND RECYCLE EVERYTHING WE CAN, EVERY TIME!**

**WHAT CAN I DO? WHO'S IN CHARGE? HOW DO I KNOW WHAT GOES WHERE?**

***See the next page!***

# **ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTIONS**

See the KSU recycling program at:

- [http://www.kennesaw.edu/ehs/ehs\\_recycling.shtml](http://www.kennesaw.edu/ehs/ehs_recycling.shtml)

Program details at:

- [http://www.kennesaw.edu/ehs/ehs\\_campusannouncement.htm](http://www.kennesaw.edu/ehs/ehs_campusannouncement.htm)

Request service or maintenance for recycling issues:

- [http://www.kennesaw.edu/ehs/ehs\\_envreq.htm](http://www.kennesaw.edu/ehs/ehs_envreq.htm)

## **KSU Faculty and Admin contacts:**

Gerald C. Donaldson, REM  
KSU Director of Environmental Health & Safety

Dr. Tim Hedeem  
Chair, KSU Environmental Concerns Committee  
Chair, HSS Environmental Studies faculty collaborative

Dr. Ronald Matson  
HSS Environmental Studies

## **Student Organizations:**

### **Kennesaw State University Environmental Alliance**

<http://science.kennesaw.edu/student.org/enviro>

[ksuenvironmentalalliance@yahoo.com](mailto:ksuenvironmentalalliance@yahoo.com)

# ENVIRO ED OPTIONS AT KSU!

## Environmental Studies at KSU

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Environmental Science?*

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Become conversant in the science that affects the environment.

### **Science Emphasis:**

Gain the knowledge and skills to collect, analyze,  
and evaluate environmental data.  
Learn how to integrate science with policymaking.



Contact Dr. Liza Davis ([ldavis@kennesaw.edu](mailto:ldavis@kennesaw.edu), 770-423-6116) or Dr. Ed Chan  
([echan@kennesaw.edu](mailto:echan@kennesaw.edu), 770-423-6930) in the Department of University Studies  
(Library 4<sup>th</sup> floor).

*And - find more information about Environmental Studies,  
American Studies, and other interdisciplinary programs at*

<http://hss.kennesaw.edu/departments-programs/>

Note: pictures from the Environmental Studies website are courtesy of Dr. Nancy Pullen



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Reading group forums and discussions at  
<http://kennesawamericanstudies.net/discussion/index.php>.