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Introduction

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Introduction

Abstract

This introduction precedes the initial issue of the journal *Cultural Encounters, Conflicts, and Resolutions*.

Keywords

border studies

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In this inaugural issue of *Cultural Encounters, Conflicts, and Resolutions* the articles illustrate our focus on the study of borders in several realms: National, political, social, cultural, racial, and educational borders as they are experienced physically, psychologically, or symbolically. The articles examine situations and populations originating in Africa, Australia, India, Iran, Italy, and the U.S.

To cross borders in education, Dana Cole asserts, the performance art of Guillermo Gómez-Peña helps to create a form of public pedagogy or a/r/tography. Her study, "The Body as Politic: Education and the performance Art of Guillermo Gómez-Peña," examined the integration of art into content-area studies.

Incorporating such works into pedagogical practice helps students form more relevant questions and understand that borders converge "in heterogeneity, contradiction, and flux," which can lead to independent thought and analysis.

Rachana Johri and Krishna Menon examine the sociocultural impact of women's working in malls in India. Their study, "Daily Border Crossings: Negotiations of gender, body, and subjectivity in the lives of women workers in urban malls," examines the border crossings engendered by the relatively recent construction of shopping malls in major urban areas of India. The young women who work there must daily cross borders in class and identity as well as the physical borders between their "unauthorized" neighborhoods and the economic zones that support mall commerce. The trip back home at the end of the day requires another physical, psychological, and socioeconomic border crossing.

A common question interwoven through all six articles is that of identity. Stephen Magu considers the multiple aspects of the identity of African immigrants, as part of the African diaspora, and their adaptation to life in the U.S. He is careful to point out that the African diasporan experience produces an identity and experience that are distinct from that of the African American and yet still removed from the mainstream American experience. His article, entitled "More than a tribesman: the New African Diasporan identity," also suggests that the immigration experience offers the opportunity to forge a post-tribal identity while incorporating positive African cultural aspects into a new life.

The immigrant experience is not, however, positive in the situation that Francesco Melfi describes in "Immigrants, Roma and Sinti unveil the 'National' in Italian Identity." He discusses the history and evolution of a sense of national identity in Italy and how, both recently and in the past, many Italians perceive the Rom as threats to that identity. He suggests that Italy is a perfect test site to examine the questions that surround migration, immigration, and national identity.

In contrast, in "Intergenerational Conflicts in Iran: Myth or Reality?" Mohammad Panahi presents results of studies that indicate that the sociological phenomenon of the generation gap scarcely exists in Iran. He analyzes results of research on value-oriented and norm oriented differences and found that they were minimal. Thus, the generations of this country do not live in two "totally different worlds."

Yet, some of the “boat people” discussed in Christopher White’s “Australia’s Boatpeople Policy: Regional Cooperation or Passing the Buck?” are from the Mideast as well as from Asia. White describes past, recent, and current policies regarding asylum seekers who arrive in Australia in light of an arrangement with Papua, New Guinea to host and manage such immigration. He explains how the arrangement with Papua can be perceived as a way to avoid responsibility and transfer it to a struggling nation. In addition, he shows that Australian public concern over these immigrants is an overreaction.

Many of the articles discuss common themes such as immigration, and racism. Others have socioeconomic and sociocultural common threads. The encounters and conflicts that they describe are compelling; the resolutions are yet to come. We hope that readers of this first issue will agree.