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The Formation of an ethnic identity : the life history of a Filipino/ Native American

Mark Pasion
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**The formation of an ethnic identity: The life history of a
Filipino/Native American**

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San Jose State University, 1992

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THE FORMATION OF AN ETHNIC IDENTITY:
THE LIFE HISTORY OF A FILIPINO/NATIVE AMERICAN

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Social Sciences

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Mark Pasion

December, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

THE FORMATION OF AN ETHNIC IDENTITY: THE LIFE HISTORY OF A FILIPINO/NATIVE AMERICAN

by Mark Pasion

This thesis addresses the topic of ethnic identity formation. This case study examines the life history of a biracial individual whose ethnic background is both Filipino and Native American.

Parental and family influences, peer influences, community and societal influences, and governing bodies are significant factors in determining one's ethnic identity. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore how the above mentioned factors influenced the ways in which this individual formed his ethnic identity.

The significance of this study goes beyond a theoretical level to a more practical level. As the United States moves toward becoming a more multicultural society, it becomes increasingly important to look at the issue of ethnic identity and how it is formed among individuals.

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Chapter I

Introduction

This thesis is a case study of how one individual formed his ethnic identity. This is a particularly interesting case study in ethnic identity formation, due to the individual's unusual background and upbringing. There are a number of issues involved with this case that have been described in the social and psychological literature. There are the issues of biracial background, ethnic identity conflict, minority group social status, parental and peer influences, and the issue of growing up in various multicultural communities. These issues can be generally grouped into four influential factors. The factors are parents, peers, society, and the government. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore how the above mentioned factors influenced the ways in which this individual formed his ethnic identity.

The significance of this study goes beyond a theoretical level to a more practical level. Statistics show an increase in the number of interracial marriages in this country, and a significant upswing in the number of biracial and multiracial individuals. As this country moves toward becoming a more multiracial and multicultural society, it becomes increasingly important to look at the issue of ethnic identity and how it is formed.

Since this thesis is concerned specifically with ethnic identity, a working definition of both ethnicity and ethnic identity would seem to be in order. Eugene Obidinski makes an astute observation in his statement that "ethnicity,

as a process or consequence of social interaction, is perhaps better understood than explained by social scientists" (Obidinski, 1978, 213). The variety of definitions and explanations concerning ethnicity is astounding. William Sumner suggests that "the origins of ethnicity derive from the collective allegiance to sociocultural patterns, values, and practices which direct human activity from generation to generation" (Obidinski, 1978, 214). Andrew Greeley writes, "Ethnicity is based on man's primordial tie. . . a sense of belonging to something which makes him somebody" (Obidinski, 1978, 215). Tomatsu Shibutani defines an ethnic group as "people who conceive of themselves as being of a kind. . . united by emotional bonds. . . concerned with preservation of their type" (Obidinski, 1978, 215). And finally, Eugene Obidinski defines ethnicity as,

varying degrees of reciprocal, common identification (or "peoplehood") marked by (a) symbols of shared heritage; (b) an awareness of similar historical experience; and (c) a sense of ingroup loyalty or "we-feeling" associated with shared social position, common ancestry, designation by those outside the group, similar values or interests, and often - but not inevitably - identification with specific national origins (Obidinski, 1978, 216).

These definitions and explanations are all valid; however, for the purposes of this study, the definition will be simplified, and ethnicity will be defined as being the socially ascribed race, culture, religion, or language group that one belongs to or is distinctive of. A broad definition of ethnic identity refers to, "one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership" (Rotheram,

1987, 13). Ethnic identity differs from ethnicity, in that "ethnicity" references group patterns and "ethnic identity" relates to the individual's acquisition of the group patterns. Ethnic identity is separate in concept and function, from one's personal identity as an individual, even though the one may reciprocally influence the other (Rotheram, 1987).

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

There has been a great deal of interest amongst researchers, in the formation of an ethnic identity, such as, how individual(s) perceive who they are and to what group(s) they belong. Ethnic identity formation is a process, and as such, one's ethnic identity can change depending on the various factors and stages present in one's life.

Parental and family influences, peer influences, community and societal influences, and governing bodies are significant factors in determining one's ethnic identity. All of these have an impact, and each impinges upon the process of ethnic identity formation in its own way. Although it is difficult to say which of these exerts the most influence, each is significant because of individual variation.

Influences of Governing Bodies

For some people, ethnic identity is a matter of conscious choice, and for others, governing bodies choose how they will be identified. From the inception of this nation, Anglo-Saxon immigrants and their descendants have been the most powerful and influential ethnic group in America. They controlled the major social, economic, and political institutions, and they denied ethnic groups that differed from them, the opportunities to fully participate in the decision-making processes. Banks and Gay (1978) state that,

The English used their power to perpetuate Anglo-Saxon institutions and

culture and to discourage the continuation of life styles and values systems that were non-Anglo-Saxon. Non-English European immigrants were faced with the decision of either assimilation and inclusion into mainstream society or nonassimilation and exclusion from total participation in the social, economic, and political systems (Banks & Gay, 1978, 239-240).

Non-European, non-White ethnic groups faced the most serious problems, due to their skin color. Since Anglo-Saxon norms were institutionalized as "American norms" and as "acceptable standards of behavior," the result for many of these "colored peoples" was the loss of important aspects of their primordial cultures and institutions (Banks & Gay, 1978). What Banks and Gay describe, can be generally referred to as power-conflict theory in racial and ethnic relations. Theorists like Robert Blauner take a colonialism viewpoint, and recognize the central role of government in supporting the exploitation of non-Anglo-Saxon peoples. To ensure dominance and power over these groups, the English used their political power to legislate against them. For example, when Africans were brought to America, the dominant group ridiculed their native languages and punished them for practicing their native customs (Banks & Gay, 1978). Another example involves Mexican-Americans being denied the right to speak Spanish in the schools, even though the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed at the end of the Mexican-American War, guaranteed them the right to maintain and perpetuate their language and culture (Banks & Gay, 1978).

If you examine racial classifications historically, statutory definitions of race provide that, "A person is a member of the racial group either if he has a

stated percent of the blood of that group in his or her veins or if he has any ascertainable trace of the blood of the group" (McRoy, 1985, 165).

Society has historically tended to categorize any person who has any amount of negro blood as a member of the negro, or black, race. Therefore, when blacks married non-blacks, their children became black, regardless of skin color (McRoy, 1985). John Brown (1987) points out the fact that in certain parts of this country, if a black man was involved with, or was merely suspected of being involved with a white woman, usually violence was directed at the man, and ostracism at the woman. In June, 1983, Louisiana was forced to drop its "Black Blood Law" which designated anyone with one thirty-second "Negro blood" as black. State officials repealed the law, and opted instead, for a new law that would reflect modern thinking. The new law allowed the parents to designate the race of their children, and took the power away from the state legislature to dictate how a child will be classified. But regardless of how the parent chooses to identify the child, chances are that society will view the child as black. Gail Fullerton writes that,

a de facto caste line based on race has existed in the United States - and to some degree remains today. It has been maintained in the past by occupational barrier, by the prohibition of interracial marriages and by defining as black all children of mixed white and black ancestry. Even when interracial marriage has been legal, it has not been possible for the white spouse to confer his or her status on the black (Brown, 1987, 25).

While many states had laws that prevented black-white marriages, it was not until 1967 that the Supreme Court, in Loving v. Virginia, ruled that prohibiting

black-white marriages was unconstitutional, and violated the civil rights of the couple.

Other racial and ethnic groups have experienced official definitions of race,

including the distinction in South Africa between "native" and "coloured", between "recognized Indians" and others of Indian descent in a number of Latin American countries, and the varying definitions of Native Americans (American Indians) by different agencies of the federal government in the United States (Simpson, 1985, 28).

We need look no further than the history of our own country to find numerous examples of how our government has defined the ethnicity and identity of various ethnic groups. The Naturalization Law of 1790 made it explicit that only free white immigrants could qualify for naturalization. Citizenship, and therefore full participation in the political system, was denied for years to non-whites and even to some whites of southern European extraction.

Blatant discrimination and prejudicial legislation has been leveled against the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and other Asian groups. In fact, in 1854 the California Supreme Court ruled that the Chinese immigrants should be classified as "Indians" so that they could be denied political rights available only to white Americans (Feagin, 1989). The Chinese Exclusion Law of 1882 was, according to Sucheng Chan (1990), the first congressional attempt at banning would-be immigrants on the basis of race and color.

The 1924 Immigration Act sharply reduced the number of immigrants from eastern, central, and southern Europe and totally excluded the Japanese.

Korean immigration had already been cut off by Japan during the 1920's, and Eastern Indians were kept out by a provision in the 1917 Immigration Act that allowed geographic rather than ethnographic criteria, due to the fact that Indians are technically Aryans or Caucasians (Chan, 1990).

Filipinos presented a special problem to exclusionists due to their status as U.S. Nationals. As Nationals, Filipinos could not be subjected to restrictive immigration laws, so their status was changed by the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, whereby they became aliens when the Philippines was elevated from a territory of the United States to a commonwealth. Immigration quotas were then put into effect.

Takaki (1982) rightfully points out that during World War II, Japanese Americans, unlike German Americans and Italian Americans, were forcefully interned in relocation camps. They were defined and treated as a polity by the U.S. government. "Of the 120,000 internees, 70,000 were U.S. citizens by right of birth. Japanese in America were not regarded as 'free individuals' but as members of a polity simply because of their Japanese ancestry" (Takaki, 1982, 30).

Chan (1990, 62) says that what set Asian immigrants apart from others was the discriminatory laws that "aimed to deprive them of their means of livelihood, restrict their social mobility, and deny them political power." Many groups, Asians included, experienced prejudice and violence, but Asians were heavily legislated against by the government. Chan continues,

When the coercive powers of the state are used to determine what is acceptable and unacceptable, then individuals who are the targets of codified prejudice have few means with which to counteract such overwhelming moral and physical power. Asian immigrants remained subjugated minorities for so long because all units of the state apparatus - the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal, state, and municipal governments - have at one time or another been used against them (1990, 62).

When the government legislates to ethnic groups what is acceptable and unacceptable, they are in a broader sense, defining their ethnic identity. They are setting parameters as to who they are, and who they can become. Asian groups do not stand alone as being the only groups that have had prejudicial laws passed against them. Many other ethnic groups have been "influenced" by the government. The following is a brief discussion of Native Americans or American Indians.

American Indians have a long history of being treated as members of polities, and not as citizens. The United States Constitution recognizes Indians as polities, and in the 1871 case of Mckay v. Campbell the court ruled,

To be a citizen of the United States by reason of his birth, a person must not only be born within its territorial limits, but he must also be born subject to its jurisdiction. . . . But the Indian tribes within the limits of the United States have always been held to be distinct and independent political communities, retaining the right of self-government, though subject to the protecting power of the United States (Takaki, 1982, 30).

Indians were the first victims of the European colonization process in America, and as Feagin (1989) says, they are the only "subordinate racial or ethnic group whose life was to be routinely administered directly by a bureaucratic arm of the federal government" (Feagin, 1989, 184).

Michael Omi and Howard Winant developed the theory of "racial formation" which emphasizes how governing bodies influence ethnic identity. Omi and Winant suggests that the government is instrumental in the social and political definition of racial and ethnic relations. Since its inception, the United States government has been concerned with and has actually shaped the politics of race. The actions of governments range from the passing of legislation, to the imprisonment of immigrants defined as a threat (Feagin, 1989, 40-41). Feagin agrees that a lengthy series of laws have defined racial groups in this country, as well as the inter-relationships between the races. For example, the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, restricted immigration from the Philippines, even though it was a U.S. territory, because of anti-Filipino attitudes that existed in the United States during the Great Depression in the 1930's.

Societal Influences

The greater society also influences ethnic identity in ways other than the dictates from governing bodies. According to Arce (1982), "ethnic identity provides an individual with a sense of historical continuity to life, a continuity based on preconscious recognition of traditionally held patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that is the cornerstone of a sense of belonging" (Ruiz, 1990, 29). Kurt Lewin in 1948 "proposed that individuals need a firm sense of identification with the heritage and culture of their ingroup in order to find a secure basis for a sense of well-being" (Driedger, 1976, 131). Jack Rothman (1960) summarized Lewin's theory and identified three important independent

but related variables which form an individual's sense of ethnic self-identity. These variables are ethnic self-affirmation, ethnic self-denial, and marginality. "Ethnic affirmation describes the extent to which members identify with the ethnic support provided by their ingroup" (Driedger, 1976, 133). Are they proud to be associated with the ingroup, and do they wish to remember it and participate in it? "Ethnic denial might include feelings of inferiority, of being restricted by and annoyed with the ingroup, or a necessity to hide cultural identity" (Driedger, 1976, 133). The feelings might be due to negative stereotypes of the ingroup, created by members of the majority culture. Lewin's concept of marginality refers to "the uncertain position of persons experiencing two cultures but identified with neither; it can also include the idea, at the psychological level, of a 'discrepancy' between ingroup members' real and ideal identifications" (Driedger, 1976, 133). Driedger's study supports Lewin's thesis that "individuals need a firm clear sense of identification with either their ingroup culture or with the host society. Insufficient group security tends to result in denial and marginality" (Driedger, 1976, 141).

The concept of marginality is interesting as it applies to mixed-race people. Some of the sociological literature, including that of Park and Stonequist, found that mixed-race people occupy a marginal position because of the fact that they are not fully accepted in either the black nor the white group, even though they technically belong to both. Although the Park Study deals with the black/white racial dichotomy, people of various mixed ethnicities

and races can experience marginality. Stonequist observed the American "mulattoes" of the 1930's and described two possible adjustments to this kind of marginal position,

mixed race people could either seek acceptance with the white group or they could attempt to join the black group (sometimes as leader or mediator); if neither of these courses were taken, they would remain transient, moving uneasily between the two groups (Wilson, 1981, 46).

Wilson describes the disadvantages of each course of action. To choose membership of the white group, the person had to have physical characteristics that closely approximated the white norm. They were also in danger of being viewed as socially pretentious. To choose membership in the black group, meant relinquishing certain advantages which were inherent in white status. The alternative of remaining in between the two groups, "condemned the individual to a precarious psychological fate through not being fully integrated into the racial structure" (Wilson, 1981, 46). Some of the researchers (Antonovsky, 1956; Goldberg, 1941; Golovensky, 1952; Seeman, 1950) found that it was possible for mixed race people to "persist in dual, ambiguous or partial racial identifications in particular situations, without encountering any social or psychological ill effects" (Wilson, 1981, 49). This shifting of boundaries, potential fluidity and dynamism of ethnic situations, is what some researchers refer to as "situational ethnicity."

Paden (1967) coined the term "situational ethnicity," which is a juxtaposition of the two concepts - social situation and ethnicity. "Situational

ethnicity is premised on the observation that particular contexts may determine which of a person's communal identities or loyalties are appropriate at a point in time" (Okamura, 1981, 452). In its simplest form, situational ethnicity describes how a person can believe and act in a certain way in one social situation, and behave differently in another due to shifting ethnic boundaries. According to Max Gluckman,

An individual's membership in a particular group in a particular situation is "determined" by the values, interests, and motives that influence his behavior in that situation. Individuals can thus live coherent lives by situational selection from a medley of contradictory values, ill-assorted beliefs, and varied interests and techniques (Okamura, 1981, 452).

We live in a racially diverse society, and it makes all of us acutely aware of racial differences. Anne Wilson makes the observation that it is not so much the differences, as the fact that society attaches such significance to these differences. Society looks at outward physical appearance, skin color and the like, and uses this as a gauge of deeper, personal characteristics (Wilson, 1981, 43).

If we acknowledge the fact that our society is becoming increasingly multiracial, then it is important for us to examine how people's ethnic identity is influenced by an ethnically mixed society. In a study done at Yale University (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978), they used a distinctiveness postulate to predict the salience of ethnicity in the spontaneous self-concept. In other words, they believe that people notice in themselves what is different or distinct, and they perceive themselves in terms of those distinctive features.

They further believe that as others perceive and respond to us in terms of our distinctiveness, we adopt their views of ourselves and formulate a self-concept. Their postulate implies that "ethnicity is more salient in people's self-concepts in an ethnically mixed society than in a segregated one and that in an integrated society, ethnicity is more salient in the self-concepts of members of the minority group than of the majority group (McGuire, 1978, 512). The authors argue that their postulate has important social policy implications as it applies to our children and our schools. The implication is that as schools integrate, children become more conscious of their ethnicity, and are more likely to define themselves in terms of their ethnicity. This would, according to some researchers, apply more to the minority group than the majority.

In the study by Garza and Herringer (1986) the Social Identity Survey was used to elicit and record students' "idiosyncratic social identities." An ethnically diverse sample of American undergraduate students were asked to list the first ten of their own social identities that came to mind. Of the 134 participating students, 58.2% included ethnicity on their list. An even more interesting finding was the difference in importance that ethnicity had among the ethnic groups studied. Ethnicity was listed by only 32% of the Anglo students, compared to 66% of the Asians, 55% of the Blacks, and 78% of the Hispanic students. The researchers state that,

The finding that members of ethnic minority groups listed ethnicity more frequently than did members of the mainstream ethnic group is consistent with previous research showing that ethnicity is a highly salient

self-dimension for ethnic minorities. . . . As members of the societal in-group, Anglos may view their ethnicity as relatively unimportant, though highly stable. Minorities, on the other hand, lacking a comparable social status, may regard their ethnic social identity as an important aspect of social categorization in our society (Garza, 1986, 306).

Garza's study shows the importance of ethnic social identity. The question then becomes, at what age is this ethnic awareness developed?

Joyce Ladner, in discussing ways to assist interracial children in developing a healthy self-identity says that,

Racial awareness comes as early as three years of age, and all children know that their race influences how they are categorized by others. No matter how racial issues are handled at home, biracial children find that society designates them as members of one group. Society does not permit them to be mixed (Ladner, 1982, 7).

Ladner goes on to say that children may also receive, from their parents, certain messages attached to being a member of a particular race, and those parental messages may differ from those messages that they receive from the larger society. People of color, for example, very often teach their children to grow up proud of their cultural and ethnic heritage, but society teaches that certain ethnic groups are inferior to others. These parents face the task of making their children feel secure and loved, while preparing them for the harsh reality of racism.

Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo, and Cota (1990) differentiate between racial awareness and ethnic awareness, and cite studies that show that racial awareness and ability to recognize own group members starts at 3-5 years of age, and that the recognition of ethnic groups, and especially mixed-race

groups, starts at a later age. They attribute the age differential to the cognitive demands of considering race versus ethnicity.

Perhaps racial awareness develops earlier than ethnic awareness because ethnic awareness may require attention to complex cues such as behaviors, customs, beliefs, and values rather than the perception of often obvious physical characteristics (Bernal, 1990, 4).

Bernal, et al., suggest that it is not until age 8-10 years that children develop the understanding that one's own ethnicity is constant.

Children's information about their ethnicity and ethnic group membership may be acquired through social learning experiences provided by their families and communities, as well as by the dominant society. As they grow older and have greater freedom and wider opportunity for social contact, they learn increasingly complex information and integrate past learning with present learning (Bernal, 1990, 5-6).

The findings of the Bernal study bear on the previous ethnic identity literature and add credence to the notion that "ethnic minority children's ethnic identity is formed through the influence of their own ethnic background as well as through the experiences that they encounter in contact with the dominant society" (Bernal, 1990, 22).

Kate Shackford, a co-director of the CIBC's Project on Children of Interracial Families, organized a conference in New York City in 1984, to address the needs of interracial families. The conference participants were asked by a reporter, "Why the need for conferences and interracial parents' groups if you're just normal families?" One parent answered, "We are not the problem, but because society sees us as a problem, it creates problems for our children" (Shackford, 1984, 4).

Erickson (1956) argues that the development of a positive self-identity is a major task of childhood and adolescence. He believed that significant and generalized "others" of the larger society, provide definitions of self to the child, and it is up to the child to process and internalize the definitions. If the definitions are affirming, a positive identity is likely, and if the definitions are disparaging or mixed, a less healthy identity is more likely. This give and take process is central to a sociological approach of human interaction known as symbolic interactionism. Herbert Blumer (1969), summarized this viewpoint in three basic principles.

First, we act toward things according to the meaning we give them.
 Second, the meaning we give to things is the result of social interaction.
 Third, in any situation, we go through an internal process of interpretation - we talk to ourselves - in order to give the situation a meaning and decide how to act (Popenoe, 1989, 100).

According to this approach, when a person acts, they must fit what they do with what other people in the social situation are doing or thinking. A person must first interpret the actions of others and then adjust his or her responses to them (Popenoe, 1989).

Research by Parham (1989) on his model of psychological Nigrescence (defined as the process of becoming Black), he extends the (Cross, 1971) model and hypothesized that Black racial identity is a lifelong process that begins around adolescence. Cross's research suggests that the development of a Black person's racial identity is often characterized by movement through a four-stage process, starting with what he terms "Pre-encounter" and ending with

"Internalization." Parham acknowledges these stages; however, he believes that a person can start at one stage, continue through the process, and then move back through the stages again as necessary. The Cross model implies that once a person has made it through the process to completion, they are permanently "internalized." Parham says, "the home environment in which the youngster is raised (including values transmitted by the parents) as well as the social environment in which they interact on a daily basis will influence their racial identity" (Parham, 1989, 195).

Parental Influences

We have seen how society influences the choices that people make about their ethnic identities. Ultimately, it seems, it is the individual who decides how he will designate himself racially and ethnically. But parents have considerable impact upon that decision-making process. Anne Marie Florence states,

As the child grows to maturity he slowly develops a sense of who he is and how others view him. A child who is in the process of developing a sense of himself is completely dependent, in this early stage of development, in how others view him. For a child, the primary "other" will be his parents. They are the best mirror with which he can get a clear view of who he is (Pasion, 1987, 2).

In a study done by Margaret Beale Spencer (1983), she states that in the course of socialization, important characteristics of self or identity elements are, unfortunately, infrequently discussed with children by the parents or significant others. Instead, these characteristics are relegated to, "informal, impersonal

agents of communication (e.g., television, toys, children's readers)" (Spencer, 1983, 354). In her study of black, pre-school aged children, she found that,

The lack of direct teaching or discussion of specific cultural values resulted in the learning of traditional, unchallenged cultural beliefs (i.e. eurocentric - white biased - racial attitudes/preferences). Afrocentric cultural values resulted only from parental intervention (Spencer, 1983, 369).

Spencer's study validates the fact that the transmission of parental values and beliefs through direct teaching or discussion does appear to influence a child's cultural values. Support for this argument is also offered by Comer (1980) when he notes that,

Society has a core interest in the indoctrination of children who represent "its new recruits." In transmitting the culture through child rearing, parents pass on attitudes, values, ways, and skills which permit child development from a state of complete dependency to a more or less independent adulthood status. Achievement of these ends requires that socializing agents promote the psychological, social, and intellectual development of their offspring by modeling and directly teaching the required behavior to their children (Spencer, 1983, 355).

Wallace Lambert and Otto Klineberg (1984) conducted a large-scale cross-national study of children's views of themselves, their national group, and foreign peoples. They explored how conceptions of in-groups and out-groups develop from the ages of six to fourteen years old. The terms "ingroup" and "outgroup" were coined by William Graham Sumner, to describe the feelings of group members toward their own and other groups. "Ingroup" refers to the group to which they belong and feel loyal, while "outgroup" refers to any group to which they do not belong, and feel is less worthy than their own (Popenoe,

1989). Lambert's research suggests that young children's ethnic identities start with the contrasts that they are induced to draw between their own ethnic group and comparison groups chosen by adults. "Contrast Training" as they call it, is the choice of adults because it proves to be an effective means of fixing group boundaries, and satisfying children's inquiries about who they are. The adults have at their disposal the means to either heighten or tone-down contrasts that promote ingroup/outgroup thinking. It is the researchers' contention that most parents do little to tone-down the contrasts, and in fact do more to promote distinctiveness and differentiation in association with particular religious, racial, cultural, and national groups. Lambert sums up his findings as follows:

What we find is that the "distinctiveness" and "uniqueness" of own-group versus other-group that adult socializers believe in and try so diligently to inculcate in their children may be more apparent than real. Cross national similarities are at least as real and powerful as cross-national differences, if not more so. What is instructive about all this is that we may now see more clearly how adults are implicated in providing exaggerated and false bases for the identities their children form (Lambert, 1984, 362).

Lambert argues that there are fewer real or important differences separating ethnic groups than most people expect. He makes a good argument that because adults provide their children with exaggerated and false bases, prejudiced and separatist thinking gets its start.

It is within the context of this prejudiced and separatist thinking that biracial and multiracial children are being raised. For biracial and multiracial children, ethnic identity formation problems may be compounded due to their

dual or multicultural backgrounds. Parents can add support, or sometimes act as deterrents to a healthy ethnic identity. Several researchers have described the roles of parents in the identity process, whether the child is mixed-race or not. In the interest of brevity, several of these ideas will be consolidated into the following concepts about racial awareness and ethnic awareness.

1. Parents should be comfortable about their own identities and should acknowledge and discuss racial heritage with their children.
2. Children need an atmosphere of openness where racial and ethnic issues can be discussed; where they can freely discuss questions about the complexities of cultural identification; and where children can talk candidly about their feelings.
3. Children should be given the opportunities to develop relationships with peers of all races and ethnicities by attending integrated schools, and by living in integrated neighborhoods or communities.
4. Both parents and children should have frequent satisfactory contacts with people of diverse ethnicity who are positive role models, through social activities and membership in formal and informal organizations and institutions.
5. Parents should deal openly with racism. Children should be given accurate information - discussed in age appropriate ways - about racism in our society and the ways in which it may affect them.
6. Children need assistance in sorting out their own unique ethnic identity. The family needs to help children tackle the complex issue of dealing positively with both the definition imposed by society, and with one's self-identity.

The family and parents have a heavy responsibility in the process of ethnic identity formation. This responsibility is magnified in families formed by interracial adoption or transracial adoption (the adoption of children of one racial background by families of another racial background). The abundance of

research done on this topic points to the fact that as more cross-cultural adoptions take place, the more important it becomes to discuss the issue of ethnic identity. The six concepts discussed in the previous paragraph hold true for these parents, however they have their own unique problems. Critics of these types of adoptions argue that white families (as a typical example) cannot successfully transmit a black identity to a black child, a Mexican identity to a Mexican child, etc. They also argue that a white family cannot adequately equip the child with the coping mechanisms needed to grow up in a racist society. Other groups, like a group of American Indian leaders at a meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in July, 1972, condemned the practice of placing Indian children in white homes, calling the practice a form of social genocide (Simon, 1974). One opponent to cross-cultural adoption, Leon Chestang (1972) in his article entitled "The Dilemma of Biracial Adoption," refers to the "dilemma" when he asks the question, "Does biracial adoption of non-white children run counter to their welfare, frustrate their personality development, and confuse their identities?" (Chestang, 1972, 100). The author deals primarily with the issue as it relates to black children. He believes that due to racism, negative attitudes exist among blacks. He further believes that only black families can provide black children the assurance of an environment that provides optimal opportunity for growth, development, and identification. Chestang states that,

The black man is not a marginal man, but a bicultural man. He does not live on the fringes of the larger society, he lives in both the larger society and in black society. This duality originates from the experience of

functioning in two cultures (Chestang, 1972, 102).

The author feels that blacks that grow up in black neighborhoods have a community to fall back on for support, whereas blacks raised by whites lose contact with the black experience and will be unprepared to deal with the "exigencies of black life" (Chestang, 1972, 103). For Chestang, parents of the same race and ethnicity, and the larger community, are two of the most important factors that bear on a black person's ethnic and racial identity.

Research done by Mae Hill and Joyce Peltzer (1982) echoes some of the same concerns discussed by Chestang. The authors believe in the importance of small support groups for white parents who are raising black children. The purpose of these parental support groups was to help the parents raise their children with "strong, positive black identities and self-concepts" (Hill, 1982, 565). The authors felt it was necessary for white parents to "examine their own self-esteem and self-concept issues; to identify their own racism, the racism of others, and institutional racism; and, to understand how racism impacts upon their lives" (Hill, 1982, 565). Hill and Peltzer, unlike Chestang, seem to be acknowledging that transracial adoption can be successful, if the parents are aware of the problems and take steps to solve them.

Numerous researchers (Andujo, 1988; Ladner, 1982; McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale, & Anderson, 1984) dealing with transracial adoptions have looked at the characteristics and motivations of families that choose to adopt. In a study done by McRoy, et al., the researchers examined how numerous factors

affected children's racial perceptions. The families that were studied were white families that had adopted children with at least one black birth parent. The factors that the researchers emphasized were the racial composition of the child's school and neighborhood, presence of other black siblings in the home, and the parents' perceptions, attitudes, and consequent actions toward the racial background of the child. The findings suggested that transracial adoptions require special efforts on the part of the adoptive parents (McRoy, 1984). The researchers write that,

The daily lives of the transracially adoptive family should demonstrate acceptance not just of one black child but of other blacks as well. This can be accomplished by the family's implementing an interracial style of living, characterized by having black social contacts, providing black role models for the child, choosing to reside in a racially mixed setting, and enrolling the child in a racially mixed school (McRoy, 1984, 39).

In another study of transethnically adopted Hispanic adolescents done by Andujo (1988), the author says,

The socialization experiences of the adoptees were paramount in determining the development of their ethnic identities. Factors such as parental efforts to disseminate culture; attitudes of parents; and environmental factors such as peers, school, and other significant role models appear to have been instrumental in fostering the adoptees' positive sense of ethnic identity (Andujo, 1988, 534).

Significant to this study was the parental role in the development of ethnicity in the two groups. In the first group, made up of trans-ethnic adoptive parents, 80% of the parents had raised their children with an Anglo-American culture orientation, and had deemphasized ethnicity. These parents spoke of adopting "human beings," and not ethnic individuals. This group had minimal or

superficial contact with Mexican-American people, and instead opted to use an educational approach to teach cultural awareness to their children. The second group, made-up of same-ethnic adoptive parents, emphasized socialization to Mexican-American culture by exposure and living in the cultural context.

Approximately 87% of these parents stressed a bicultural tradition and had emphasized development of an ethnic identity. Andujo concludes that although no significant differences were found in the overall level of self-esteem between the transethnic and same-ethnic adoptees, ethnic identity appears to have been more of a problem for the transethnic group than for the same-ethnic group of children.

Whether you are talking about mixed-racial, uniracial, biracial, or multiracial children, children's racial and ethnic attitudes and identities are influenced by the attitudes and practices of their parents.

Peer Influences

Research has shown how important the role of parents is in the formation of an ethnic identity. But, how important are peers in the process? How do our peers contribute to our formation of an ethnic self-identity? Research done by Davey and Mullin (1982) confirms two points about racial awareness and prejudice that have been substantiated over the years and in several different research studies. They found evidence that children become aware of ethnic identity at an early age, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, they found that this awareness is accompanied by a distinct

preference for the child's own ethnic group. Using the extent of inter-ethnic friendship choice at school as their measure, Davey and Mullin found, as they put it, "White and Asian children mixing together in schools with a high concentration of Asians. . .display the greatest degree of ethnocentricity in their friendship patterns" (Denscombe, 1983, 184).

In another study done by Martyn Denscombe in 1983, the findings tend to support those of Davey and Mullin, as well as others, who have identified ethnic bias in friendship choice at the primary school level.

Much of the research on racial identity deals with issues among mixed-race individuals. Ruth McRoy (1985), discusses the development of racial self-concept in mixed-race children. McRoy points to two basic processes involved in developing a racial identity. The first process McRoy terms, racial conception, is concerned with when and how the child learns to make racial distinctions at a conceptual level. The second process, racial evaluation, deals with when and how the child evaluates his or her membership in a racial group. There is a close relationship between these two processes by which children learn "who they are" and "the value of who they are."

In numerous studies of children's ethnic and racial identification, the researchers have used dolls and pictures that are representative of their own group and of the white majority group. Most of the studies of preschool and young school-age children, seem to support the idea that children of all colors show a white bias when asked to choose a picture or doll that they most like,

or is most like them, or that they would like to be friends with. But some skeptical sociologists argue that a preference of white friendship choice does not automatically mean a rejection of others. They point to factors like the exclusion of certain doll choices (i.e., Chinese, Indian, etc.), the race or ethnicity of the experimenter, and even the color shading of the dolls or photographs. The constructs - identification, preference, and attitudes - have been more widely studied in young children than in older children and even adolescents. The research evidence suggests that young ethnic and racial minority children demonstrate a white bias for these constructs. Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990) write,

Reasons for these findings remain unclear, although ecological and cognitive maturation explanations are plausible. Normative cognitive limitations of younger children along with ecological factors may complicate and confuse the task of interpreting their ethnic and racial misidentification (Spencer, 1990, 297).

As stated earlier, children of all ethnicities and races show a greater preference toward and identification with their own group as they get older and more mature. Research points to the difficulty teenagers experience in adolescence, and the added stress caused by trying to balance between establishing a unique identity while attempting to adhere to peer values.

In adolescence, especially, ideas and perceptions of ethnic identity are shaped by peer standards. According to McRoy's findings, if a mixed race (black/white) adolescent is rejected by peers on the basis of racial background or is unable to discuss racial identity with peers or parents, this transitional

period (adolescence) can become even more difficult.

For children to view their mixed-racial background positively, the family must nurture both parts of the background by providing the child with both black and white role models and by exposing the child to black as well as white peers in the community and in school (McRoy, 1985, 166).

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs describes the difficulties that mixed-race adolescents have in developing a cohesive, well-integrated self-concept. Gibbs speaks of the offspring of black-white marriages as occupying the unique status of belonging to both majority and minority castes. Gibbs states that "biracial teens must integrate identifications with parents from two racial backgrounds while simultaneously negotiating their own social status in their peer group" (Gibbs, 1987, 266). Gibbs describes adolescence as the phase of development when peer groups assume greater significance in shaping attitudes and behavior, and a time when they worry about social acceptance.

Research done by Marcia (1966, 1980), provides some useful information in regards to studying ethnic identity in minority adolescents. Marcia conceives of identity as four statuses (diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement) which are described as follows:

Marcia's paradigm describes four identity statuses based on the presence or absence of exploration and commitment. An individual who has neither engaged in exploration nor made a commitment is said to have a diffuse identity; a commitment made without exploration, usually on the basis of parental values, represents a foreclosed status. An individual in the process of exploration without having made a commitment is in a moratorium; a firm commitment following a period of exploration is indicative of an achieved identity (Phinney, 1989, 35).

Achieved identity is seen as the most sophisticated status, and the goal for a

healthy self-concept. Since we are specifically concerned with ethnicity, we can equate identity achievement to acceptance and internalization of one's ethnicity.

Arce (1981) says,

Following this period of cultural and political consciousness, . . . individuals develop a deeper sense of belonging to the group. . . . When the person finally comes to feel at one with the group, the internalization process has been completed, and ethnic identity established (Phinney, 1989, 39).

Summary of Literature

This review of the literature has been quite extensive, and a number of concepts and issues about ethnic identity have been discussed. As a way of reviewing or highlighting most of the important concepts discussed in the literature, ten propositions that focus both on racial identity development and ethnic identity development will be presented. Racial identity development is included, because the author Elsie M. J. Smith (1989) considers it to be a small part of the broader, ethnic identity development. The propositions are as follows:

1. Human development is determined by a multiplicity of factors, including biological, ethnic, cultural, and environmental factors.
2. These determinants interact over the life span of an individual to form what is known as an individual's personality and characteristic way of approaching life.
3. Human development is rarely smooth; instead, it is characterized by movement forward, backward, and sideward.
4. The meaning of any event lies within the **three levels of identity** of each person. These three levels may be defined as the **individual** or **idiosyncratic** level of identity - that part of the person that makes them

unique; the **group level of identity** (this is where ethnic and racial identity would fit in), which consists of group-shared aspects of one's identity; and the **panhuman level**, which focuses on universally shared aspects of one's identity.

5. The ethnic identity of each person consists of signs, symbols, and underlying values that point to a distinctive group-shared identity. The outward signs of ethnic identity are similar race, religion, and national origin. Culture is one aspect of one's ethnic identity.
6. Ethnicity and culture are viewed as part of everyone's development; they are not just limited to racial minorities. As a result of one's ethnic background and culture, each person develops a particular worldview or outlook on life based on their ethnic identity, culture, and socioeconomic class.
7. Each ethnic group has a certain style or manner of acting or performing in relationship to life events that is sanctioned by some group standard. Likewise, there are also nonsanctioned styles of responding to life events. In general, there are values shared by ethnic group members and behaviors that characterize their responses to particular situations.
8. The extent to which a person uses their ethnic identity as a reference point for determining the stressfulness of a life event is based upon their level of ethnic identity. A person can be committed as much or as little as they choose to an ethnic group. Birth and a long period of socialization into an ethnic identity heritage provide a person with minimum competency in a given ethnic identity.
9. Most individuals evidence a situational use of ethnic identity, which suggests that people can choose, within certain constraints, a variety of identities; that people will attempt to maximize their options and use ethnic identity if they see an advantage in doing so; and that the use of ethnic identity is fluid and flexible.
10. For an ethnic identity to remain a part of an individual's identity, that person must affirm and reaffirm the boundaries of inner and outer groups (Smith, 1989, 277).

These ten propositions touch on many of the key concepts of ethnic identity development. While the list is not inclusive of everything that was covered in

this review, it represents an overview of research done on ethnic identity development.

The original hypothesis in this study was that certain factors heavily influence how an individual forms an ethnic identity. Those four influential factors are parents, peers, society, and the government. The literature that was reviewed bears out the importance of each of these in ethnic identity development, and although other factors certainly impinge on the process, these four factors were very influential in the following case study of how one individual formed his own unique ethnic identity.

Chapter III

Methodology

This is a case study of my father, whose name is Vince. Vince is biracial. He comes from a background of Native American and Filipino ancestry. His father was a Filipino-American immigrant, and his mother was a full-blood Native American.

An interviewing process was used, since that seemed to be the best method of obtaining the information that was needed. The interviewing process spanned a three month period of time in 1992, during which Vince was interviewed on six separate occasions. He was questioned about his family background and history in order to relate it to the historical ethnic literature discussed in the following chapters. He was also questioned about how he viewed his own ethnicity at various times in his life, and how major life events affected how he viewed his ethnicity (i.e., being kidnapped by his father, finding out about his true ethnic background, etc.). The length of time spent interviewing Vince varied on each occasion; the shortest interview lasted one hour, and the longest interview lasted almost six hours. Approximately eight hours of interviews were recorded on audio tape, and much of this information has been reported in narrative form in the life history chapter.

During the series of interviews, a number of issues were uncovered that are relevant to this case. There is the issue of his biracial background, the issue of his belonging to two different minority groups at different stages in his

life, the issue of growing up with a white mother and misidentifying himself as white, the issue of ethnic identity conflict, and the issue of growing up in various multi-cultural communities. All of the above had an impact on the formation of Vince's ethnic identity.

The life history format (case study method) works well for this thesis for a number of reasons. The first reason that comes to mind stems from the fact that qualitative data is being collected, rather than quantitative. The data collected that relates to Vince's ethnic identity is better explained in a written narrative style, than it is by graphs or charts. Also, the data collected from Vince was better obtained by oral interviews, rather than by survey or questionnaire type techniques. The life history format works well with this thesis because the study covers a long period of time, which contains significant historical events that helped to shape identity formation. This format also works well when dealing with subject matter that has not been extensively explored before, such as this particular study which explores the ethnic identity formation process of an individual who comes from two ethnic minority backgrounds. Because this study is interdisciplinary and includes an historical, sociological, and psychological perspective, the life history format serves in blending these perspectives into one case study that transcends the boundaries of any individual discipline.

David Mandelbaum describes the great potential benefits of using life history methodology. When doing research, there are three important factors

worth noting,

(1) The dimensions or aspects of a person's life; (2) the principal turnings and life conditions between the turnings; (3) the person's characteristic means of adaptation. The dimensions provide categories for understanding the main forces that affect a life. The turnings mark major changes that a person makes and thus demarcate periods of his life. A focus on adaptation directs our notice both to changes he makes and to continuities he maintains through his life course (Mandelbaum, 1973, 180).

Certainly the life history format works well with this thesis; however, it is not without its limitations. When trying to recall pieces of the past, subjects are bound to be selective in what information is divulged to the interviewer. The information gathered is subjective and one-sided. In this particular case since the subject was the researcher's father, and they have a personal relationship, that fact has to be taken into consideration when examining the bias of the interviewer. The researcher did, however, try to be as objective as possible, and did in fact explain to Vince his role as a participant in this research study. Vince signed an agreement to participate statement, which may be found in the Appendix of this thesis.

In order to find out who you are as an individual, and how you fit into society, it sometimes becomes helpful to look into the past to see where you, your family, and your ethnic ties lie. Since Vince comes from Filipino and Native American descent, a brief history of the Filipino-American experience in the United States is included in the next chapter, and a discussion of the experience of Native Americans can be found in the following chapter. These

historical synopses will serve as a springboard to discuss the background information of Vince. His ethnic identity can be directly tied to some of these historical facts.

Chapter IV

The Filipino Experience In The United States

First Wave: 1763 to 1906

It might be surprising to some, to find out that Filipinos have lived along the bayous and marshes of southeastern Louisiana as early as 1763.

According to research done by Marina Estrella Espina, Filipino-Americans can take pride in, and can lay claim to their rightful place in American history.

Espina's research points out the following historical facts.

- Filipinos were the earliest Asians to cross the Pacific Ocean for the North American continent because of the Manila galleon trade between Mexico and the Philippines from 1565 to 1815.
- These "Manilamen" - as they were commonly called - were the very first Asian immigrants to settle on soil, now comprising the Continental United States, specifically, the State of Louisiana, after jumping ship because of harsh treatment from their brutalizing Spanish masters and escaping into the bayous and marshes to build their own villages.
- Filipinos settled even earlier during the sixteenth century in Acapulco, the main port of call of the Manila galleon run in the New World, by deserting their Philippine-made galleons, mixing in with the native Mexican population, settling in other regions of Mexico, and marrying Mexican women.
- Filipinos were among the Baratarians who fought with the American smuggler and privateer-turned-patriot, Jean Lafitte, against the British during the battle of New Orleans in 1815.
- The first social club, founded by Filipinos in the U.S., has to be the "Sociedad de Beneficencia de Los Hispano Filipinas de Nueva Orleans," whose members established in 1870 the Hispano-Filipino Benevolent Society of New Orleans (Cordova, 1983, 1-2).

According to Espina,

These seafaring exiles and working sojourners comprise the real First Wave of Filipino immigration to the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. This era extends from 1763 to 1906 to include other arrivals as stowaways, steamship employees and other mariners, domestic helpers

and others in personal services (Cordova, 1983, 10).

Second Wave: 1906-1934

The Second Wave is the group that is most important, for the purposes of this study. This group had the most impact upon this case study, because Vince's father came to America in that Wave, and the time period is relevant to his story. The Second Wave of Filipino immigration to the United States spanned from 1906 to 1934. The reasons for immigration included higher education, sense of adventure, lack of employment in the Philippines, and the promise of a better life in America. First came the "pensionados," the students who came for a higher education. The Pensionado Act was an educational program started in August, 1903. The program plans called for sending promising young Filipinos to the United States, in hopes that after getting their education they would return to the Philippines and instill the American way of life among their own people (Melendy, 1977). The largest group in the Second Wave was made up of laborers. These laborers were predominantly young, single, and male.

According to Fred Cordova (1983), Filipino-Americans never were present visibly and numerically among American manual laborers until "Sakadas" were recruited in 1906, to the Hawaiian sugarcane fields. Sakadas were workers from the Philippines, who were indentured to a three-year contract of manual labor.

Sakadas were the first among Filipinos, outside of the Philippines, to

experience economic oppression, superimposed poverty, overt racial bigotry, labor exploitation, social rejection, educational neglect, political disenfranchisement, societal denials and civic wrongs amidst frugal existence, tarnished dreams, empty promises and continued struggles to beat the heavy odds against them (Cordova, 1977, 30).

Before 1934, Like the Sakadas in Hawaii, thousands of Filipinos chose to go directly to the Continental United States. They entered through ports in Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. They arrived not as immigrants, but as wards of the United States, as nationals. During the last few years of this Second Wave, two significant events happened that greatly impacted Filipino immigration. The first event was the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act (or the Philippines Independence Act) in May of 1934. "This act elevated the Philippines from a territory (U.S.) to a commonwealth, guaranteed independence in ten years, declared all Philippine-born Filipinos as aliens and restricted their immigration quota to fifty a year" (Cordova, 1983, 19). This act was a reaction to anti-Filipino attitudes that began hardening during the Depression. Cordova (1983) points out that because Filipinos and whites were competing for the scarce available jobs, the nativists started demanding the exclusion of Filipinos from the country. They claimed that Filipinos brought down the standard of living because they worked for lower wages. Bigots proclaimed that Filipinos posed social dangers because of their attraction to white women and, conversely, white women's attraction to these brown men. The second major historical event that impacted the immigration of Filipinos, was World War Two. World War Two completely stopped all means of passage

for Filipino immigrants.

Filipino-American Identity

Prior to 1942, Filipinos could not volunteer for military service, since existing law made no provision for the enlistment of nationals. They were also denied employment in defense factories (Melendy, 1977). "On March 6, 1942, President Roosevelt opened the way for Filipinos to work in government and in war industry. Earlier, on February 19, Secretary of War Henry Stimson announced the formation of the First Filipino Infantry Regiment" (Melendy, 1977, 50).

Even though Filipinos were now allowed to enlist, or work in war industry, citizenship was a continual problem. Without citizenship, Filipinos had difficulty practicing law, medicine, and other licensed professions. The right to own real estate was restricted. California in particular prevented Filipinos from owning or leasing farm land. They also had difficulty obtaining marriage licenses. Anti-miscegenation laws in the 1930's were soon to be applied to Filipinos also. The 1930 U.S. census found 45,208 Filipinos in the mainland states. The 45,208 included 42,268 men and 2,940 women. The sex ratio was 14 males to one female (Cordova, 1983). In 1901, the State of California enacted a law forbidding whites to marry blacks, Mongolians, or Mulattoes. In 1933, the California Supreme Court ruled that the term "Mongolian," did not include Filipinos, because they were of the Malay race.

The California Legislature quickly closed this loophole in 1933 by

amending the State's civil code to include persons of the Malay race in the list of people whom whites could not marry. by 1937, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington had enacted laws prohibiting marriages between Filipinos and whites (Melendy, 1977, 53).

In 1948, the California Supreme Court ruled that California's anti-miscegenation law was unconstitutional. The Court held that legislation limiting the right of members of one race to marry those of another was a violation of civil rights.

Filipinos did in fact encounter racial prejudice, and many were perplexed by the dichotomy between American democratic philosophy and ideals and the actual practice of same. In 1937, Carlos Bulosan wrote about his recollection of his experiences in America.

. . . Western people are brought up to regard Orientals or colored peoples as inferior, but the mockery of it all is that Filipinos are taught to regard Americans as our equals. Adhering to American ideals, living American life, these are contributory to our feeling of equality. The terrible truth in America shatters the Filipinos' dream of fraternity.

I was completely disillusioned when I came to know this American attitude. If I had not been born in the lyrical world, grown up with honest people and studied about American institutions and racial equality in the Philippines I should never have minded so much the horrible impact of white chauvinism. I shall never forget what I have suffered in this country because of racial prejudice (Melendy, 1977, 62).

Those times were hard for the first-generation Filipinos, but they also impacted the second-generation, to which Vince belonged. He grew up in a white-controlled, white-focused society which could be institutionally hostile to Filipinos. As Cordova (1983) says, in order to enter the white world of attainment, the young Pinoys had to leave behind their brownness. Most of the second-generation Filipinos did not speak the dialect of their parents, but they

did have some understanding of it. English was their primary language, and the parents communicated to them in English. While they still ate Filipino food, and retained a number of Filipino social-cultural values, the second-generation had their own special way of dressing, dancing, speaking, and surviving. Filipino-American culture developed into a unique and extraordinary subculture.

Filipino-Americans have been unlike all other Asian and Pacific-American ethnic groups. More than half of the Filipino-American offspring, circa 1946, have been products of mixed parentages. As a result, second and third generation Pinoys and Pinays also were of White, Mexican, American Indian, Alaska Native, Hawaiian, Black, Chinese, Japanese, Puerto Rican and other Hispanic and Asian ancestries. Among them were stepchildren, foster children and offsprings of previous unions. They were not only hardy but hardened, streetwise, to the realities of an impoverished but flamboyant Pinoy lifestyle, inclusive of street life (Cordova, 1983, 164).

Cordova's historical account of first and second-generation Filipinos in the United States reads like a life history written about Vince. The similarities between what Cordova writes about, and what life experiences Vince tells about, are astounding. A chapter dealing with Vince's life history will explore how being a Filipino-American impacted Vince's life and indeed his ethnic identity.

Chapter V

The Native American Experience In The United States

Pre-European Culture

Native American culture predates European entry into the North and South American continents by thousands of years. However, European colonization and expansion were the social process that brought subordination to Native Americans and their cultures (Feagin, 1989). One historian describes the process in this way,

The European conquest of the Americas had been termed one of the darkest chapters of human history, for the conquerors demanded and won authority over the lives, territories, religious beliefs, ways of life, and means of existence of every native group with which they came in contact. No one will ever know how many Indians or how many tribes were enslaved, tortured, debauched, and killed. No one can ever reckon the dimensions of the human tragedy that cost, in addition to lives, the loss of homes, dignity, cultural institutions, standards of security, material and intellectual accomplishments, and liberty and freedom to millions upon millions of people. The stain is made all the darker by the realization that the conflict was forced upon those who suffered; the aggressors were the whites, the scenes of tragedy the very homelands of the victims (Jackson, 1974, 120).

Joe Feagin says, Native Americans have suffered from a variety of stereotypes,

from the wooden cigar-store figure to the bloodthirsty savage of the movies to the noble primitive of novels. Tomahawks, scalping, feathered headdresses, and red men on wild ponies - such images have been impressed on the Euro-American mind by mass-media sensationalism, including distorted images in magazines, newspapers, movies, and television (Feagin, 1989, 176).

Probably the biggest misconception about Native Americans, or Indians, is that

there is one single Indian culture. There never was only one single Indian culture, and in fact, the diversity of cultures among tribes is astonishing. The languages, customs, beliefs, and personalities of Indians varied and still varies widely. Wilcomb Washburn estimates that "between 1000 and 2000 languages existed in the Americas at the time of European contact, each mutually unintelligible with every other" (Washburn, 1975, xv). Diseases and superior firepower from the Europeans accounted for a sharp reduction of Native Americans in North America from one to ten million at the time of first contact to approximately 200,000 by 1850. The number of Native Americans stayed between 200,000 and 300,000 until the 1930's when the figures started to rise. The 1980 census reported that 1.4 million people identified as American Indian, and 6.8 million Americans in total, claimed some Native American ancestry (Feagin, 1989, 177).

This study is concerned with describing the cultural changes that occurred in Indian life because of outside pressures. Native Americans have had their social and ethnic identities shaped largely by whites. American Indians have existed on a plane of inequality, and their destiny continues to be impacted by the dominant white society.

Influences of White Society

Native Americans have suffered racial prejudice, inequality, discrimination, and alienation from the dominant society, but so then have other minority groups. What makes the Native American experience different from all other

minority groups in their relations to the dominant society? Luis Kemnitzer

(1978), outlines four major aspects:

1. They were here at least 30,000 years before any other immigrants arrived, including the dominant society, instead of migrating to an already-established society.
2. Since the beginning of European conquest, Indians have struggled to maintain their separate cultural identity and religious traditions, and their economic and mystical relationship to the land, rather than to enter the economic, social, and political mainstream.
3. Their status as a single minority is a result of administrative categorization that lumps over two hundred languages and a score of different traditions together, rather than a result of common national, linguistic, religious, or long-term historical experience.
4. Not only have Native Americans suffered from nearly every violation of constitutional and human rights claimed or sought by other ethnic groups, but they have also been the example by which racism is taught to other ethnic minorities as well as members of the dominant society (Kemnitzer, 1978, 5).

Kathleen O'Brien Jackson believes that the experiences of Native Americans as a minority differ from other minority groups in two important respects.

First, the Native Americans have a tradition of tribal identity which includes the basic right of self-government. The fact that tribal sovereignty was both recognized by the federal government and yet suppressed by means of bureaucratic control demonstrates an important paradox of our democratic political system. Second, no other minority may so clearly trace the deprivations and injustices of their condition directly to the highest level of federal administration. Indians have not been victims of "benign neglect" but rather products of a form of paternalism predicated on a lack of tolerance or respect for cultural differences (Jackson, 1974, 130-31).

Government Intervention

The federal government of the United States has legislated nearly every

aspect of Native Americans' lives, over the course of the years. Luis Kemnitzer believes that the United States could not have progressed without the "displacement and neutralization of the Native population." He further states that "the policies of extermination, isolation, and assimilation that have competed for ascendancy all required the definition of Natives as savage, inferior, and less than human, and their cultures as inferior and deservedly doomed to extinction" (Kemnitzer, 1978, 9).

The U.S. Government originally dealt with Indians as sovereign nations; however, as disputes arose over the interpretation of Indian rights under treaty provisions, the government took on the role of federal guardianship, and created a special administrative agency to deal exclusively with Indian affairs. On March 11, 1824, Secretary of War Calhoun created what he called the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (Prucha, 1962). The new bureau became a part of the War Department, since Indians were viewed as a military problem. As the United States started expanding westward, it became "necessary" to relocate Indian tribes to lands west of the Mississippi River. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act: "Within a decade many of the tribes of the East voluntarily or forcibly migrated to lands west of the Mississippi under the auspices of negotiated treaties" (Feagin, 1989, 180). Feagin explains that treaties were part of United States law, and were used to establish regulations governing tribal behavior, as well as establishing restricted areas called reservations. Between 1790 and the Civil War, the U.S. Government made

three hundred treaties with Native American tribes. Congress and the Bureau of Indian Affairs began altering treaties without the consent of the Indian tribes, and finally the treaty process was abandoned by 1871 (Feagin, 1989).

In 1849, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was shifted from the War Department to the newly created Department of the Interior. Most of the eastern tribes were being pacified on reservations in the Oklahoma territory. The real problem for the U.S. Government, was the Plains Indians, who fought efforts to get them to reservations. The Interior Department tried negotiation, conciliation, and persuasion to get these tribes on reservations, while the War Department considered them hostile, dangerous, and fair game (Lurie, 1968). In 1862, it was decided to designate the Indian tribes as "wards" of the Indian Bureau, rather than as "enemies" of the U.S. Army. The designation of "ward" was used earlier in 1831, by Supreme Court Justice John Marshall, in a court decision in which he stated, " Their (Indians) relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian" (Lurie, 1968, 37). Lurie says that the term "ward" took on "administrative connotations by which the Bureau (BIA) exercised incredible control over the lives and property of individuals much as guardians would act for minor children" (Lurie, 1968, 37).

Acting as guardians, the U.S. government decided that Indians should be taught new rules of land use. The Dawes Act of 1887, also known as the Indian Allotment Act, provided that reservation lands be divided among individual families for farming use. Each family or individual was allotted a certain number

of acres, and the remainder of land was sold to the general public, with the proceeds of the sale going to buy stock and farm equipment for the Indians. This led to an enormous land-grab by white outsiders. Indians that were inadequately informed, or ill-prepared technically to manage farms, often lost their land through tax default or sale to payoff debts (Lurie, 1968). One of the more controversial aspects of the allotment act concerned the education of Indian children in boarding schools, away from parental influences. The parents were not given a choice in the matter, and many families were broken up or destroyed by the separation. Indian religions were also being suppressed in favor of Christianity (Spicer, 1969). Another aspect of the allotment act concerned citizenship for Indians. Indians could become citizens if they showed themselves competent in managing their land allotments. "Some Native Americans were issued 'certificates of competency' by special 'competency commissions', which decided if they could function well in the white world" (Feagin, 1989, 185). It wasn't until 1924, when Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, that Indians were granted citizenship, including voting rights. However, the U.S. Supreme Court continued to view Indians as wards of the government and argued against the Citizenship Act. This led to many state governments continuing to deny services to Indians, and refusing to let them vote. "On the other hand, the federal government on occasion tried to break off its services on the ground that Native Americans were officially citizens. Native Americans were caught in a political quandary" (Feagin, 1989, 185). Edward

Spicer (1969) sums up the conventional wisdom of the times as it relates to Indian affairs.

In short, the trend toward denial of Indian political rights was only part of a general program instituted by the United States Government for denial of Indian self-determination generally. Indian ways of life were regarded as a hindrance to improving Indian conditions and no discussion or consultation with Indians concerning changes was considered necessary (Spicer, 1969, 68).

A new federal policy was developed in the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. The highlights of this new legislation was that tribes could decide whether or not to come under the new act, which ended land allotment, controlled the sale of tribal lands, and most importantly setup tribal governments. The act seemed progressive, and gave the appearance of tribal self-government somewhat independent of the federal government. However, great power was put into the hands of the Secretary of the Interior, who supervised the BIA. "The Secretary made rules for elections, could veto constitutions, supervised expenditures, and made the regulations for land management on the reservation" (Feagin, 1989, 185). As Feagin points out, the law appeared progressive to the uninformed, but it ignored many problems and the "ward" relationship to the government remained in effect. In 1954 the pendulum began to swing again in the direction of individualistic land ownership by Indians. House Concurrent Resolution 108, called for the "termination" of federal supervision of Indian tribes. Between 1954 and 1960 several dozen groups were terminated, meaning that they were no longer under federal

guardianship. The government's intent was to return to the policy of forced conformity to individualistic values of land use, and to get Indians more assimilated into mainstream white society (Feagin, 1989). From the 1960's until the present time, federal policy has been moving away from termination and towards a more self-determination policy.

Striving for Self-Determination

A strong argument can be made that forced acculturation has been practiced on Native Americans. Indian children have been subjected to missions and boarding schools, where they were taken away from parental influences and taught white values and behavior. Laws and directives have been legislated to assimilate their parents to the same. In 1879 the commissioner of Indian affairs stated the government position in the following passage:

Indians are essentially conservative, and cling tenaciously to old customs and hate all changes: therefore the government should force them to scatter out on farms, break up their tribal organizations, dances, ceremonies, and tomfoolery; take from them their hundreds of useless ponies which afford the means of indulging in their wandering, nomadic habits, and give them cattle in exchange, and compel them to labor or to accept the alternative of starvation (Feagin, 1989, 204).

It is interesting that over one hundred years later, some people still advocate forced assimilation. The president of the Mormon church reportedly commented about Indian lifestyle.

When you go down on the reservations and see these hundreds of thousands of Indians living in the dirt and without culture or refinement of any kind, you can hardly believe it. Then you see these boys and girls

(placed in Mormon homes) playing the flute, the piano. All these things bring about a normal culture (Feagin, 1989, 204).

More so than any other minority group, a special relationship does exist between Indians, and the federal government and their administrative practices. At the core of the problem is the fact that Indians just want some self-determination. " Self-determination is the most basic demand of Indians because it entails the recognition by non-Indian society, and the federal government in particular, that Indians have a right to exercise control over their own destinies" (Jackson, 1974, 128). Peter Farb (1968), a well-known anthropologist and Indian scholar states,

Many Indians today feel that they are being seduced by an industrial society that offers them few of the values that Indians have traditionally cherished - most particularly, the conviction that human beings, not property, are central to society. Many Indians today are asking only for the opportunity to determine their own destinies and to recapture values that have proved their worth in the past. They ask for the right to decide how their land is to be used, how their children are to be educated, their customs perpetuated, and their reservations administered (Farb, 1968, 276).

In an essay entitled "Toward Cooperation and Dignity" (1970), the American Friends Service Committee hit the nail right on the head when they said,

The real issue is the attitude of the whole society toward difference... Difference is nearly intolerable in a society which expects conformity in behavior and outlook - one which tends to equate equal treatment with identical treatment, acceptable behavior with conforming behavior, integration with assimilation... Indians... see the matter more clearly than do non-Indians. Although they may not express it in so many words, they are well aware that the aim is to get rid of them as Indians. Indians, insisting on their right to unique tribal existence, .. are asserting the right

to a freedom of choice - asking to stay out of certain aspects of American society. Whether intentionally or not, they are challenging the claim that the society believes in freedom of choice, and are providing the opportunity for the society to conserve, to its own enrichment, a certain human viewpoint and set of values (American Friends Service Committee, 1970, 173-175).-

Self-determination, being who you want to be, and determining for yourself how you choose to identify yourself ethnically; this is the legacy that Vince receives from his Indian ancestry. To Vince, self-determination is the most important factor in defining his ethnic identity.

Chapter VI

Life History of Vince Pasion

Family Background

This is a case study of Vince, who is bi-racial. Vince was born in 1933, in Wapato, Washington, on the Yakima Indian Reservation. His mother (Frances) was a full-blood Indian, registered with the Potawatomi tribe. His father (Bill) was a Filipino immigrant from the Philippines, and was in fact one of the original seven Filipinos to settle in Wapato in 1918 (Cordova,1983). Vince lived with his natural parents until the age of three, when his father died. He also had four siblings living at home at the time. He had an older brother and sister, a younger brother, and an older half-brother.

Vince was extremely upset by the death of his father, and his mother felt that he needed a father-figure around. Vince had spent a lot of time, and in fact had been living on a part-time basis, with a couple (Ben and Anne) who were friends and neighbors of Bill and Frances. When his dad died, Vince started living with Ben and Anne on a permanent basis. When Ben got a job offer to work at a big hotel in Seattle, he got permission from Frances to take Vince with him, with the understanding that she be kept aware of his whereabouts, and that she could come to visit as often as she wished. So Vince moved to Seattle with Ben and Anne.

Ben was a second-wave immigrant from the Philippines, who came to the United States in 1924 at the age of fifteen. He came for an education and the

promise of a better life. His first summer in Seattle, he went to work in the canneries in Alaska, and on his trip home he met Anne. Anne was white, and quite a few years younger than Ben. She came from a poor family in North Dakota. They tried to get married, but because of the anti-miscegenation laws, they were not allowed to marry. At some point, they did in fact get married and they moved to Wapato, Washington. There was a sizable Filipino community in Wapato at the time, and this is where Ben met Vince's father, Bill. Ben and Bill were active in organizing an all-Filipino packing house, that would benefit the Filipino agricultural workers. Ben and Anne lived on a farm with Bill and Frances. You could walk the distance between their two houses, and as neighbors, this is how Ben and Anne came to know Vince.

Early Childhood Identity

Vince moved to Seattle with Ben and Anne, when he was about four years old. So now he was living in a new environment with a white "mother" and a Filipino "father," neither of whom is his natural parent, but whom he regards as such. Vince describes his ethnicity at this point in his life.

When I was very young I didn't realize that I wasn't white. I grew up with a white step-mother, who I believed was my birth mother, and even though my father was Filipino, I don't think I identified (ethnically) with either. I knew I was Filipino, but it wasn't a color issue. I had a white mother, but I didn't see her as any different. When I was four or five years old she was just mom. Eventually when I was in school, kids made me aware that there was a color difference. I knew I was darker than other kids but it didn't become an issue.

McRoy and Freeman (1985) report that,

The preschool and early elementary-school years (ages 3-7 approximately) are recognized as a crucial period in the growth and differentiation of the child's feelings about self and about others who are ethnically differentiated. During this period, the child becomes increasingly aware of racial differences and learns labels and emotional responses associated with various ethnic groups, including his or her own (McRoy, 1985, 165).

When Vince was under five years old, he didn't think about his ethnicity, unless it was brought to his attention, as in the case of other children making mention of it. When he reached school age he attended a predominantly white Catholic school. He knew he was darker than other kids and he knew he was Filipino, but he also thought he was half white. He was ethnically oriented as a Filipino, because he ate Filipino food at home, and the family associated with Filipinos extensively. Vince says that as a kid he thought it was fun to be Filipino, because of some of the things he associated with being Filipino.

We would get together and have parties and so forth, and a bunch of guys would come to our house and play cards. In Filipino culture you always pamper the kids, and when they came to our house they would bring me money, candy, and soda pop. When the men came back from the canneries in Alaska, they would have lots of money, what they didn't lose gambling, and they would bring back presents and we would have a big party. I put that all together as it was fun to be Filipino.

Vince was very much in tune with the local Filipino community, and he enjoyed being Filipino. The local community, which became part of his extended family, was responsible in part for Vince's ethnic awareness.

These cannery workers that Vince spoke of, or "Alaskeros" as they were called (Cordova, 1983), had little or no option but to work as common laborers in the canneries. Filipinos provided a steady work force for the Alaska fish

canneries, and Cordova (1983) estimates that as many as nine thousand Pinoys worked there during peak salmon canning seasons. The canneries provided a place where Filipinos could make good wages and quick money. The season only lasted a couple of months, and the work was hard, but the money had great appeal. Many students were drawn to Alaska for summer work, so that they could afford to attend college in the fall. This is one way that Ben would make money when he was a student.

Pre-Adolescent Instability

In 1941, when Vince was eight years old, Ben and Anne were divorced. The court awarded custody of Vince to Anne. This was a particularly interesting arrangement since Anne was not the natural mother, and did not really have any legal right to custody. Vince could not explain all the details, but he figured that the court made the assumption that he was Anne's child by birth. Ben left Seattle to work in California, leaving Vince to live with Anne. Vince stayed with Anne for about a year, and then when he was nine years old, Ben came back for a visit. Ben told Anne and Vince that he was taking Vince to a movie. Instead of going to a movie, Vince found himself on a train headed for California. Ben had kidnapped Vince, and was taking him to Oakland, California to live. Vince thought this was just a big adventure, and had no idea how his life was about to drastically change.

When my father kidnapped me from Seattle, after awhile I just kind of put my mom (Anne) out of my mind. I guess to some extent I put her out of my mind because now in retrospect it must have been a serious loss to

me. I only saw her one time after we left Seattle. She came for a short visit, and I had trouble figuring out why she didn't stay, and why I never saw her again. It was traumatic leaving (Seattle) the way we did. I can remember exactly the clothes I was wearing when my father took me away. It was a trauma leaving my mom, but not only did I leave her, but I left everything that was home to me. I can remember to this day, certain toys that were special to me, that I left behind. I left favorite toys, and I left behind a memory of my mother. After that, then she wasn't my mother anymore. I didn't want to think of her as my mother. My dad and I never talked about her, and eventually I learned that you didn't talk about her, and you basically forgot everything about the past.

Vince left behind the stability of a permanent home, and he also left behind the nurturance provided by his mother. In Oakland he lived in what he termed "flea-bag hotels." He and his dad were constantly changing hotels because Ben was afraid someone might be looking for them. Vince felt like they were hiding out in Oakland. The Filipino community was small, and everyone knew each other. If a stranger asked about either Vince or Ben, they would pack up and move to another hotel. Filipinos traveled among the different Pinoy communities in different towns and states, and Ben was concerned that someone might recognize them and report them to either Anne or the authorities. Ben was also concerned that Vince's real mom (Frances) might be looking for them, because she never gave Ben or Anne custody of Vince. They lived in the skid row section in Oakland, and with Ben working a split work shift, Vince spent a lot of time alone, and a lot of time in the streets of Oakland.

What I remember most about living in Oakland with just my dad, was that I was basically alone most of the time. When I went home after school, when I did go to school, I was alone for the rest of the time. I lived an absolutely independent and lonely life. I didn't spend anymore time in our little room than I had to. Here was a kid, nine or ten years old,

wandering the streets of skid row in Oakland. I was alone, a kid of the streets.

Formulating a Filipino Ethnic Identity

At this very tender age, Vince was experiencing some hard facts of life. He lived among winos, prostitutes, gamblers and derelicts of the street. He witnessed two murders, and saw countless acts of violence. This was his neighborhood, his playground, and the community to which he belonged. Vince learned to be self-reliant, but at the same time he felt a bond with the Filipino community.

We were living in Chinatown (Oakland), and all the people we associated with are Filipinos. Mostly single men, and only a few mixed marriage families. I could relate to the fact that I was Filipino, because now it is popular to be Filipino. This is about 1942 or 1943, and Filipinos are fighting for independence in their own country against the Japanese. In school, teachers tell me that my people are brave, and we are thought of as freedom-fighters against the Japanese. Now I'm a hero, so of course I'm a full-blown Filipino. Now it's cool to be Filipino.

This is an example of how society and the local community had an impact on the way that Vince viewed his ethnicity. But it was also during this time, when he was living only with his father, that his view of himself as part-white disappeared, and he identified as purely Filipino. Without the influence of a white mother, his father became his role model for ethnicity.

Vince was receiving mixed messages though, about what it meant to be a Filipino in the early 1940's. Even though he was hearing praises about the Filipino freedom-fighters in the Philippines, on the other hand his father could not join the U.S. Navy as a combat soldier because of restrictions against

Filipino-Americans. Prior to the formation of the First Filipino Infantry Regiment in 1942, the only jobs open to Filipinos in the U.S. Navy were as stewards. According to Cordova (1983), "the steward rating took in cooks, waiters, pantrymen, dishwashers, custodians, bedmakers, valets and all those other enlisted men, whose sole duties were to serve officers and to provide them comfort" (Cordova, 1983,84). When Ben found out that the only job open to him in the Navy was as a servant to an officer, he decided not to join. Vince was wondering why they treated Filipinos different from other Americans. He was starting to learn how government used race and ethnicity as a factor in the formation of legal codes. He had been living in Seattle in December of 1942, and he had seen evidence of Japanese-American relocation, due to the War and public sentiment. He had been going to school with Japanese children, and then one day they were not in school anymore because they had been relocated with their families to camps outside of town. Now, Filipinos were feeling the impact of the War, and Vince was getting conflicting messages.

Ethnic Identity Conflicts in Adolescence

Towards the end of the war, and when Vince was twelve years old, his father remarried, and they moved to central California, in the San Joaquin Valley town of Porterville. Porterville was primarily an agricultural town, and Ben was making his living by working in the fields. Vince's new mother was a Mexican woman by the name of Angie. She had two daughters by previous marriages, and they were close in age to Vince. This "new" family had some adjustments

to go through, and Vince had another drastic change of lifestyle. Vince's new family was a clash of people coming together. His older step-sister had been raised by her Mexican grandmother, she spoke fluent Spanish, and most of her friends were Mexican. Although she was Mexican and Filipino, she definitely identified more strongly as Mexican. Vince had another step-sister who was Filipino and Mexican; she did not speak Spanish, and she identified as both Filipino and Mexican. Vince viewed himself as a Filipino living in a Mexican-Filipino culture. Vince had a tough transition to go through. He had to get used to living in a family, where he didn't have the independence he was used to. He also had a new mother and new sister to live with. He was also the new kid in town, and the new kid in school. He was used to going to school at a nearly all-white school, and his new school was no different. However, what was different was the fact that his two sisters were going to another school, the neighborhood school, which was predominantly Mexican and Mexican-Filipino. This caused some friction in the household, and also put Vince at odds with the neighborhood Mexican kids. He was an outsider, he didn't speak Spanish, he went to a white school instead of the neighborhood school, and he ended up getting into a lot of fights with Mexican boys, and also his older step-sister over these issues.

So now at the age of twelve, Vince was experiencing an ethnic identity crisis. Vince says,

When we moved to Porterville, if anyone were to ask me what I am

(ethnically), I would have probably said I'm half-Filipino and half-American. In Porterville the kids I associated with are either White, or half-Filipino and half-Mexican. It became convenient to be Filipino and Mexican, but I didn't particularly like being Mexican. If it was someone I could just give a quick answer to, I would say my father is Filipino and my mother is Mexican. If it was someone that I cared about, I would say my father is Filipino and my mother is white.

It is obvious from the above quotation that Vince was experiencing some problems with his ethnic identity. Vince had a problem relating to Mexicans because he had been antagonized by them since moving to town. He also had a problem relating to them because they were the group that was experiencing them most discrimination at the time. They were a distinct minority in town, and there was prejudice against them. Vince says,

I never was discriminated against for being Filipino. I did experience some discrimination for being of color, and some discrimination in Porterville because people thought I was half-Mexican. I identified myself as half-Mexican to some people out of convenience for a quick answer, but I didn't like Mexicans. I was most comfortable with white people.

When Vince was in junior high school, he experienced an incident of discrimination that he can still vividly recall. He was on a scouting trip, and the boys all decided to swim at the local public swimming pool. When Vince tried to enter, the attendant denied him access to the pool. Vince thought it was a matter of whether or not he had paid, and he showed the attendant his ticket. The attendant said they didn't allow colored people to swim in the pool. Vince was the only Filipino in the troop, and he remembers sitting alone and watching the other boys swim.

In high school, Vince still had some problems because of prejudice

against non-whites. He couldn't openly date white girls because of societal pressure, and he didn't date Mexican girls because he inevitably had problems with their brothers or boyfriends. As far as Filipinos go, there was only one girl in his age group that he found attractive, so he dated her. Although Vince was popular in high school and he had many friends, he still attended a mostly white high school, and his choices in dating were severely limited. Vince describes his dilemma, "In high school I was a Filipino growing up in a white society, and in all honesty, if you asked me then, I would rather be white than anything. Dating was a problem. I knew I was brown, and that caused me problems."

It is interesting to note that Vince's attraction to white girls in high school, and his continual attraction and eventual marriages to white women, is the result of his socialization and parentage. He says,

I think one thing that definitely colored the way I looked at women all my life, was that when I was growing up in my formative years, I was living with a white mother and that was my image of what an attractive woman was. To me an attractive woman is white. Basically, I have always been attracted to white women.

Besides the influence of his white mother, his father's preference for white women also greatly influenced Vince. When his parents divorced, Vince remembers his father always had white girlfriends. Along with the parental influences, Vince's color preference in women can be directly linked to his ethnic identity. Vince said that part of his attraction to white women is for ego-gratification.

As part of the Filipino culture I grew up with, the greatest accomplishment in the world was to have a white girlfriend, or to marry a white woman. All my life the image of the ideal woman is a white woman.

In high school, Vince had white girlfriends from the labor class in town. Their parents were migrant workers, and from a lower white social class. Vince said, "there were cases of white women marrying or dating Filipinos, or even living with them. But the fact that they were with Filipinos put them in a lower social class." Vince described the sentiments of a small agricultural community in California, but this was the community and society that contributed to his ethnic identity in his adolescence.

Discovery of Indian Background

Vince identified primarily as Filipino, up until his junior year in high school. At this point in his life he was surprised by the news that he had another family living in Washington.

It wasn't until my junior year in high school that it was confirmed that I had another mother. Anne (whom he thought was his birth mother) had told me when I was younger, but nothing was ever said about it again. I met my "real" family because my brother Bill thought he was going to Korea to fight, and he wanted to see me before he left. He found out through the Filipino grapevine where I was, and he wrote me a letter. I never knew I had brothers and a sister, but they apparently knew about me. I had an older sister by the name of Penny, who died before I ever got to meet her. She remembered me as a baby, and she often talked to my brothers about me.

Besides the shock of finding out about another family in his background, Vince was also shocked to learn about another ethnicity in his background. At the age of seventeen, he found out that his birth father was Filipino, and his birth

mother was American Indian. He was very discreet about his newfound ethnicity. Vince says that locally, in Porterville, Indians were looked down upon by every one, and even though Mexicans were discriminated against, they had more status than Indians. It was not popular to be Indian. Vince said that when he discovered that he was part Indian, "I told my close friends, but it did not become my announced ethnicity; I kept quiet about it. In Porterville, as I was growing up, everyone knew me as either Filipino or Mexican or both, so it was rarely discussed."

Adolescence can be quite a stressful time for most people. Although ethnic identity development is a lifetime process, it has its normative crisis at adolescence, according to Elizabeth Aries and Kimberly Moorehead. They state, "At this stage commitments are made which provide a sense of continuity with the past yet construct a pathway toward the future" (Aries, 1989, 75). Erickson (1968), pointed out the likelihood that "members of an 'Oppressed and exploited minority' may internalize the negative views of the dominant society, thereby developing a negative identity and self-hatred" (Phinney, 1989, 34). The term "self-hatred" is a bit strong when describing Vince's case; however, it is apparent that his action of hiding his Indian ethnicity, and the feelings he had in high school of wishing he was white, demonstrates that Vince was developing a negative ethnic identity during his adolescence.

Vince's brother, Bill, convinced him to come to Washington to meet his family. He was reunited with his brothers and his mother. His mother had not

seen him, nor heard about his whereabouts, since the time that he left Seattle. She had visited him, once, by Vince's recollection, while he was still living with Ben and Anne, but she introduced herself as "Aunt Frances." Vince had some vague memory of her, and her children, at that visit, but he thought that they were just friends of the family. After Ben had moved Vince to Oakland, Frances lost contact with him. It was sheer coincidence that a Filipino man who knew both Frances and Ben discovered that Vince was living in Porterville, and he informed Frances about it.

After Vince visited with his Indian relations, he went back to Porterville, but continued to correspond with them. Ben acknowledged that Frances was indeed Vince's birth mother, but he did not get into a lengthy conversation with Vince about his past, nor did he provide many details about why Frances let him go live with Ben when he was a small child. Vince said that he got only limited information from Frances on that same subject. It appears that there was not much exchange of information about how or why Vince came to live with Ben and Anne. Perhaps the subject was taboo, because of heightened emotions, or perhaps that period of time was too painful, for anyone to talk about.

An Interracial Marriage

Even though a social stigma existed when it came to interracial dating, Vince started dating a white girl by the name of Barbara, and they were married in 1954. Both of them were very popular in high school, he as an athlete and

she as a cheerleader. Still, because of social pressures, they were cautious about dating in public. Both sets of parents knew about their relationship and the plans to be married, but Barbara's parents were reluctant to accept the idea. Vince told me, "The parents knew (about their relationship), but I didn't eat dinner at her parents' house, and they weren't that crazy about us going together." Vince and Barbara wanted a big wedding in Porterville, but it started to get complicated and expensive. In order to have that kind of wedding they would have to involve Barbara's parents. They decided to drive to Oakland, California, where some of Vince's cousins had arranged for them to have a church wedding. They were married with just a handful of people in attendance.

Their life together in Porterville was not without incidents relating to their interracial marriage. When they went to purchase a home, they came upon a house that they wanted to inquire about. The realtor informed them that it was a restricted subdivision, and that only Whites could live there. They were a little shocked by such blatant discrimination. Vince had gotten used to being the target of prejudice and discrimination because of his color, and he started to become very aware of his color and his status in society. He talked about his feelings during this period in his life.

In Porterville, the couples that we mostly hung around with were mixed marriages too. The Filipinos and Mexicans didn't much care, or bother us, but it was uncomfortable in restaurants and in public. At that time I was always on edge, because if someone looked at us weird or said something derogatory, I would have to confront them.

At this point in his life, Vince's ethnic identity was being colored by the community he lived in and society at large. He was experiencing some discrimination and prejudice and it affected the way he viewed his ethnicity. Vince said that it was a real concern for him, how his children would be viewed by society. He was relieved that all three of his children were lighter complexioned than he was, and his fear that they would be discriminated against because of color was alleviated. He still identified as primarily Filipino, but he started to acknowledge his Indian ethnicity.

Ethnic Identity Issues in Adulthood

As Vince began to get reacquainted with his Indian family, he started to openly accommodate his newfound ethnicity. His ethnicity was, on occasion, still being questioned by people. Vince cited several different incidents in his adulthood, where he was confronted by people, in regard to his ethnicity.

He remembers working as a sales distributor in Ohio, in 1965, and being called into the district manager's office regarding a work assignment.

The manager wanted me to work in Cleveland, and he was concerned because there was a lot of racial unrest at the time, due to the fact that a Black mayor had just been elected. He had some hesitation in offering the assignment to me, because so many people would think I was Black. I told him that I never had been mistaken for Black before. He was still concerned, but said that he had a solution. He knew I was an American Indian, and he suggested that I have my business cards printed up with the name "Chief" on them. He said I should have Vince "Chief" Pasion printed on the cards, and then I could explain to people that I was Indian. I told him that I would rather not do that. I said that I never had to explain myself before, and I was not comfortable with that arrangement.

Vince describes an incident that happened to him in 1972.

I was in Gatlingburg, North Carolina, at a shopping mall walking with my granddaughter. Normally, if I am in a familiar place, or in my own surroundings, I don't think about my racial identity. But I was certainly aware of it there. I could see people staring at me because I was carrying around this little blonde girl. Nobody said anything to me, but I was aware of the stares. Two men not only stared at me, but their stares were hostile. They glared at me because I was carrying this little White girl on my shoulders. It made me angry and uncomfortable at the same time. I was angry and feeling protective towards my granddaughter. I had worked in North Carolina before, and had in fact spent some time in that area, and had never experienced any problems. It was only when I was walking around with my White granddaughter that I experienced this problem.

Vince said that what he learned from his travels in the southern part of this country, is that many people still do not differentiate between people of color. He said that the general mentality is that if you are not White, then you are Colored. He believes that a White/Colored dichotomy exists, and that you are either one or the other, in the eyes of many people. Another incident happened to Vince a few years later, that relates to this definition of "White" and "Colored." Vince explains,

When I was in the Title business, I was attending a convention in San Diego, California, in 1977. I was having dinner with some of my friends, and we were joined by a manager from our Alabama office. The man from Alabama had been drinking quite a bit, and at one point in the conversation he asked me in a friendly tone, what it was like to be "colored" and living in California. I told him that obviously, where he was from, if you weren't White, you must be colored. He agreed, and said that was the way he saw it. I told him that in California, our racial definitions are different. In our vernacular, "colored" refers to "negroe" or Black. I informed him that we have Mexican, Indians, and all kinds of people, and that if he were to call them "colored," he would have some problems. The guy apologized, and he just didn't know any better.

Vince believes that some of what he experienced came not out of animosity, but rather out of curiosity. He said that people often ask him where he is from, and compliment him on his beautiful tan. People make statements about him swimming a lot, or playing golf frequently, in_order to get such a dark tan. Vince says that people frequently make comments of that sort. Last year, in August of 1991, he was in West Virginia when a woman commented on his "glorious tan." Vince continues to get a mix of reactions from people when he first meets them.

I guess I have thought to myself, or pictured myself, as having an ethnic or non-white background. To me, I look like I am Indian, or Filipino, or Hawaiian. People always mistake me for Hawaiian. If I am around Filipinos, they always know I have Filipino blood. Likewise, if I am around Indians, they pickup that I am part Indian. As dark-skinned as I am, I think that I have an ethnic look, but apparently people who have not been around minorities think that I am just a dark-skinned White person.

Ethnic Identity Transformation in Adulthood

Today, things are different for Vince, and he has a much better outlook on his ethnic identity than he did in his early adulthood.

At this stage in my life, culturally and ethnically I'm so Americanized that people have to bring it to my attention that I'm Brown, otherwise it doesn't occur to me. I just blend into what's going on around me. There was a time in my life when I absolutely knew I was Brown, all the time, and I walked around Brown.

He now believes that it is an advantage to be bi-racial.

If I am mostly around Filipinos, and closer to a Filipino culture, then I can joke about Filipino dialects and so forth, same as we start talking like a bunch of Indians when the family gets together in Washington. I kind of flow into either culture without any real conscious effort, and I'm very

comfortable in either one.

When Vince is filling out forms or documents, he identifies as American Indian and Filipino. If you were to meet him and ask him his ethnicity, he most frequently identifies as American Indian. There are probably a number of reasons as to why Vince has changed his ethnic identity over the past years, but certainly age and maturity are part of it. Vince does not identify with being Filipino in the same way as he did even ten years ago. Vince looks back at what it was to be a Filipino when he was growing up, and he remembers with love and nostalgia a bygone era. Vince's father, Ben, died in 1983, and when he died, for Vince, so did a very important link to Filipino culture. Vince explains his feelings, as well as his memories, of what it meant to be a Filipino.

The Filipinos of my dad's generation, the one's I grew up with, that I relate to very closely, are in many ways very different from the Filipinos you now meet. The first Filipinos to come over here, like my dad's generation, came for a better way of life, and were prepared to work very, very hard for it, and labor for it. Most were farmers or laborers, and they stuck close to their own group of people. There was one thing that they all had in common basically, and that was that they were somewhat intimidated by the United States and American people. They had been brow-beaten and in some cases abused by them to the point that my father always called any White man "sir," even if the man was a street sweeper. And that was a problem with me as I was growing up. Sometimes I openly resented the fact that my father felt subservient to anyone that was White, and I didn't. So I went out of my way to prove that I wasn't subservient to any White person at all. My dad grew up believing that Whites were superior to him in many ways, and most of his generation felt the same.

The Filipinos of today's generation have one big advantage. They are thoroughly immersed in American culture. They are fluent in English, are better educated, and come into this country not facing the same kind of prejudice that earlier Filipinos had to endure. In many ways the younger Filipinos might look at the older Filipinos like younger Blacks

might look at older Blacks, as "Uncle Tom." But remember, in the culture that the early Filipinos came into, they got lynched, and they got burned, and they got spit on in the streets, and they got laws passed against them, and they didn't like making waves.

The whole thing with the Filipino when he came over here; he was either working to go back to the Philippines where he could live as a rich man and get a Filipino wife, or else he wanted to settle down here, live a quiet life, raise his kids, and not bother anybody or have anybody bother him. That is all he wanted out of life. He had no great aspirations for himself, but he wanted his kids to be something. You will find very few second generation Filipinos that haven't gotten their high school diploma, maybe even some college, so they wouldn't have to labor like their fathers had to do.

The feelings that Vince expressed in the above passage exemplifies what an enormous influence his father had on how Vince viewed his ethnicity. The Filipino community as he remembers it, the family and close friends, they all had an influence on Vince. And the way the community treated Filipinos, the way that society viewed them, and the way that government legislated against them, these factors all affected Vince's ethnic identity formation.

And what about Vince's identity as an American Indian? It was not even until his adolescence, at the age of seventeen, that he found out that he was part Indian, and that his real mother was an Indian woman, and not the White woman he thought was his mother. At the time he found out about his ethnicity as an Indian, he was living in a community where prejudice was high against Indians. Societal pressure kept him from openly identifying himself as an American Indian. He did not know his Indian relatives, he was just being re-introduced into the family, so he did not have any family or parental support of his Indian ethnicity. Today, Vince identifies strongly with his Indian heritage.

Where I feel my ethnicity now is in the Indian culture. I have studied Indian culture and I realize that in my growing up, I had no Indian culture in my upbringing at all, and what Indian culture I now have I have assimilated by reading and so forth. The beautiful part about the Indian culture when you really understand it is that it was so diverse that you can fit it into any niche that you want to.

The diversity that Vince finds in Indian culture, and the fact that he is biracial have influenced his ethnic self-identity. Vince believes that overall, his ethnicity has helped him. It has helped him with people of color, and it has helped him with white people. He believes that his ethnicity has given him a sensitivity that white people cannot have. It opened doors with people of color, because he could more easily talk to, and relate to them, because if nothing else, at least they shared the fact that they were not white. With some white people, Vince feels like they view him with curiosity. Some people think he is Indian, some think he is Filipino, some think he is black, some mistake him for Hawaiian, and some think he is just a very tan white person.

Ethnic Fluidity

For Vince, his ethnic identity is fluctuant and situational. Throughout his lifetime he has been influenced by his parents and family, his friends and peers, his neighborhood community, and society at large. He said his choice of ethnic identity has, in the past, been dependent upon whatever pressures were there at the time. As for the present, Vince sums up his ethnic identity in this way, "I can be anything I want. Anything at all."

CHAPTER VII

Summary

The literature reviewed in this thesis bears out the significance of parents, peers, society, and governing bodies in the formation of an individual's ethnic identity. The purpose of this study is to explore how each of those factors influenced the ways in which Vince formed his ethnic identity.

When governing bodies legislate to ethnic groups what is acceptable and unacceptable, they are shaping and defining that groups ethnic identity by setting parameters as to who they are, and who they can become. In the case of both Native Americans and Filipino-Americans, there are numerous examples of discriminatory laws being passed against them. During the early years of World War II, Vince was receiving mixed messages about what it meant to be a Filipino. On one hand he was hearing praises about the Filipino freedom-fighters in the Philippines, and on the other hand his father could not join the U.S. Navy as a combat soldier because of restrictions against Filipino-Americans. Prior to 1942, the only jobs open to Filipinos in the U.S. Navy were as stewards, and servants to officers. Vince started wondering why Filipino-Americans were being treated differently from other Americans. And although California's anti-miscegenation laws had already been declared unconstitutional by the time that Vince was married, he grew up during a period of time when it was illegal for Filipinos to marry Whites. Vince learned through life experiences how governing bodies use race and ethnicity as a factor in the

codification of laws.

Whereas government dictates through legislation and enacting of laws, the greater society dictates through social conformity and societal pressure to adhere to the status quo. Vince acknowledged that there were periods in his life where the local community and society at large had a great impact on his view of his own ethnicity. In 1942, when Vince was living in Oakland with his father, he felt a strong bonding with the Filipino community. He was living in Chinatown, and he was associating mostly with Filipinos. In school, his teachers were telling him how brave his countrymen were for fighting against the Japanese. He said it became popular to be Filipino. When he moved to Porterville, around 1946, his ethnic identity was again reinforced by the local community. Although he was living with his father and Mexican stepmother, he made it known to others that he was Filipino and not Mexican. Mexicans were being discriminated against, and he wanted to be disassociated with them. In that same community, Indians were looked down upon, and they occupied low social status. When Vince found out about his Indian background, he kept quiet about it to everyone except his closest friends.

Vince was also acutely aware of the "color line" when it came to dating in high school. The community frowned upon interracial dating, and since there were not that many Filipino girls his age in the community, dating became a problem for him. He did in fact marry a White woman, and he experienced some prejudice and discrimination, because of the color difference.

Vince stated, that in all honesty, during that period of his life he wished he were White.

These examples point to the fact that the discrimination and prejudice that Vince experienced from the local community, definitely affected the way he viewed his ethnicity. Whether his experiences with the community were positive or negative, Vince's ethnic identity was colored by the community he lived in and society at large.

Vince's parents played a very important role in forming his ethnic identity. Because of the fact that his "adoptive" parents never told him about his Indian background, Vince spent his childhood completely ignorant of his Indian ethnicity. He had no free choice in identifying either as Filipino, or Indian, or both. The decision was made by his parents. It is also interesting to note that Vince thought of himself as half-White, when he was living with a White stepmother, whom he believed to be his biological mother. He assumed that since his mother was White, he must be also. When he started living alone with his Filipino father, away from the influences of a White mother, he started to identify himself as exclusively Filipino. Interestingly enough, when Vince started living with his Mexican stepmother, he said it became convenient to be Filipino and Mexican, even though he did not particularly like being Mexican. Vince formulated his ethnic identity, depending partly upon which parent(s) he was living with at the time. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, and even in adulthood, his father became his primary role model for ethnicity.

Research has shown how ideas and perceptions of ethnic identity are shaped by peer standards. During World War II, when Vince was a child, he suggested that his schoolmates gave him positive reinforcement of his Filipino identity, by praising his countrymen as heroic freedom-fighters. Conversely, as an adolescent, he did not want to be identified as Indian because of peer prejudice against the local Indian population. In middle school and high school, most of Vince's friends were white, and he preferred their company. Admittedly, at that point in his life, he would have preferred to be White, as his peers were.

Throughout his lifetime, Vince has evidenced a situational use of ethnic identity. His ethnic identity has been transitional, and as he stated, his choice of ethnic identity has been dependent upon whatever pressures were there at the time. He is referring to the pressures of society and government, as well as pressure exerted from peers and family.

He spent a great number of his formative years living within a Filipino construct, and his ethnic identity has been shaped accordingly. However, Vince had virtually no Indian culture in his upbringing, and what Indian culture he now has, he has developed in his adulthood.

The historical, social, and psychological literature has described the importance of parents, peers, society, and the government in the formation process of an individual's ethnic identity. This life history of Vince has validated the importance of each of those factors, and this thesis is unique in that it blends all of these perspectives into a single case study.

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Appendix

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Responsible Investigator: Mark Pasion

Title of Project: The Formation of an Ethnic Identity: A Life History of a Filipino/Native American.

I Vince Pasion, have been asked to participate in a research study investigating how people form their ethnic identities. I will be asked a number of questions about my life history, as it pertains to my personal views of my ethnicity and ethnic identity. I further understand that I am the only participant in this study, and that I am the subject of this case study. I will not benefit from participation in this study, nor do I expect to receive any compensation for same. My participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

It is further understood that the results of this study may be published.

* The signature of a subject on this document indicates agreement to participate in the study.

* The signature of a researcher on this document indicates agreement to include the above named subject in the research and attestation that the subject has been fully informed of his rights.

Subject's Signature

4-12-92
Date

Investigator's Signature

4-12-92
Date