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ABSTRACT

The major purposes of multiethnic and multicultural literature programs in United States' schools are to develop students' knowledge of and respect for the religious, racial, and ethnic diversity of U.S. citizens; and to enhance students' familiarity with and appreciation of the literary traditions of other peoples of the world. The selection of literary texts for programs designed to introduce American students to other ethnic groups, cultures, or peoples should reflect the principles of inclusiveness and avoidance of stereotype formation. Such goals can be achieved through techniques such as offering works by or about members of other ethnic groups, showing how indigenous cultures differed in relating to their neighbors and environments, featuring varied aspects of the immigrant experience, etc. In integrating multicultural and multiethnic literature into the curriculum, it is necessary to ask at the local level: (1) who decides what ethnic groups and cultures to present? (2) what criteria should determine what should be eliminated? (3) what local considerations should be kept in mind? and (4) how can the civic mission of the schools be achieved? It is important to keep in mind, however, that in selecting particular works, others are automatically excluded. It may be useful to have communities decide through the political process whether they support a multiethnic literature course or a curricular strand distinct from mainstream literature. (One appendix containing a sampling of works about the American ethnic experience and a list of 22 references are attached.) (SG)

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**Academic Criteria for Conceptualizing
Multiethnic and Multicultural Literature Programs
in American Schools**

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There are two major purposes for multiethnic and multicultural literature programs in American schools: to develop our students' knowledge of and respect for the extraordinary religious, racial, and ethnic diversity of American citizens, and to enhance their familiarity with and appreciation of the literary traditions of other peoples in countries around the world. Although these would appear to be reasonable if not desirable academic goals, any educational program designated as multicultural seems to generate enormous controversy today. Further, there seems to be an inordinate amount of confusion about just what constitutes a multiethnic and multicultural literature program for American students. The lists of suggested titles for multiethnic/multicultural literature programs as well as the descriptions of suggested curriculum units and teaching practices that I have collected from schools and teachers around the country (e.g., Blair, 1991; Gonzalez, 1990; Ripley, 1991; Robinson & Gingrich, 1991; Savage & Savage, 1991) reveal many inconsistent if not contradictory organizing principles at work. Perhaps a chief source of this confusion and inconsistency is the failure of scholars, curriculum developers, and other educators to offer a clear and consistent definition of the terms "multiethnic" and

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"multicultural" themselves; they appear to mean all things to all educators (Fullinwider, 1991).

The purpose of this paper is to offer unambiguous definitions of these terms, to elaborate on what seem to be the two major principles in selecting literary texts for a multiethnic and multicultural literature program, and to spell out specific criteria for teachers and curriculum developers to use in constructing or evaluating multiethnic and multicultural literature programs in our schools. I conclude by suggesting how such programs might be integrated into the curriculum so that our public schools can continue to fulfill their responsibility, through their literature programs as well as through their history and social studies programs, for developing our students' civic identity --the psychological basis for civic-mindedness and responsible citizenship in this country (see Stotsky, 1989, and especially Schlesinger, 1992, for discussions of this issue).

Matters of Definition

"Ethnic" is probably the most accurate term to use for all the non-indigenous groups in this country, such as Japanese-Americans, Italian-Americans, Greek-Americans, Black-Americans, Cuban-Americans, German-Americans, or Mexican-Americans. In a major work on ethnicity, Sollars (1986) refers to the "polyethnic character of America" and includes as ethnic both those groups whose members migrated or fled to this country, and those groups whose members were brought here as slaves or servants. Unlike their ethnic relatives in their countries of origin, members of these groups are not part of organically distinct cultures in this country because most of their members speak and write English after the second generation (even though some remain bilingual), participate in our political and popular culture in varying ways, and increasingly intermarry with members of other groups in this country, although at varying rates. Indeed, they differ in most critical respects from people in their countries of origin because they are no longer situated within the geographical and social context that first shaped their or their ancestors' political

values and social customs, a context that continues to shape their ethnic kin. Thus, the literature in English about members of these groups qua members of these groups should, for the sake of accuracy, be referred to as American ethnic literature rather than multicultural literature. This literature should be seen as a prominent part of our national literature.

Those peoples that under some circumstances might be considered members of organically distinct cultures in this country are the descendants of the indigenous peoples of this country, e.g., the various Indian tribes (who, according to Kruse, 1992, prefer the term Indian or their tribal name to the term "Native American") and the Eskimoes, Aleuts, and other groups in the Pacific Islands, whose current members are situated (or can still situate themselves if they choose) within the original geographical boundaries and within some of the original social context that shaped their ancestors' lives. But because the literature about members of these groups is almost always written in English and because most members of most of these groups participate legally, occupationally, and socially within our national framework, this literature, too, is best seen as part of our national ethnic literature.

In order to differentiate the term "multicultural" from "multiethnic" and to realize its apparent meaning, "multicultural" should encompass works that arise in the context of other cultures or peoples geographically separate from the fifty states of the United States of America. Other terms that might be considered synonymous are "international" or "cross-cultural." It is important to note that, in addition to works originating in Ireland and Great Britain, works arising in geographically separate literary traditions may also be originally composed in English (Myers, 1990). Almost all of the people who live in countries now part of the British Commonwealth or that were once British colonies write in English because it now functions as their national language (e.g., Ghana) or as one of their official national languages (e.g. India).

Inclusiveness and the Avoidance of Stereotype-Formation

Literature programs designed to introduce American students to our various ethnic groups or to other cultures or peoples should reflect two major principles-- inclusiveness and the avoidance of stereotype-formation. These two general principles should be used in selecting literary works for multiethnic as well as for cross-cultural literature programs. While inclusiveness as a concept is readily understandable, it is not always clear what stereotypes refer to.

Stereotypes refer to the consistent characterization of people from any ethnic, racial, or gender group in unflattering, "demeaning," or limited ways. Examples of unflattering characterizations of members of specific ethnic or religious groups are Don Corleone in The Godfather, Shylock in the Merchant of Venice, or Fagan in Oliver Twist. Characterizations now considered demeaning or insulting by some people are, for example, those of Black Americans in works that show them as only passive slaves (before the Civil War), as in Uncle Tom's Cabin, or simply as passive victims of their society today, as in Souder (see Trousdale, 1990); or, for example, those of young American males in works that show them as loners, confused social misfits, or morally depraved, as in The Catcher in the Rye, The Pigman, The Insiders, and The Chocolate War (see Nelms, 1989). Characterizations that show members of particular groups in a restricted range of activities (but which are not negative in themselves) can be found in works which portray, for example, women primarily in nurturing roles, as in Mary Poppins and Little Women, or Black Americans only as gifted athletes, as in The Jackie Robinson Story, or as criminals, as in The Autobiography of Malcolm X. Stereotypes are thus the consistent negative portraits of people from a particular social group across a group of works, or consistent portraits of people from a particular social group in a restricted range of activities and achievements across a group of works.

There are a number of ways in which the selection of literary texts for classroom multiethnic literature programs can demonstrate inclusiveness and avoid the formation of

what may be considered undesirable stereotypes of any group of human beings, regardless of race, gender, nationality, or ethnicity. To achieve inclusiveness and to help avoid the formation of stereotypes, literature programs should:

1. Include literature by and/or about members of all ethnic and cultural groups in this country. The list in the Appendix indicates a large number of the many different groups to be included over the course of many years of schooling.

2. Offer some literature about specific ethnic and religious groups, such as the Amish (the tales of Elsie Singmaster), the Shakers (e.g., A Day No Pigs Would Die), or the Hasidim (e.g., The Chosen) at appropriate grade levels.

3. Show both how indigenous cultures differed with respect to how well they got along with their neighbors as well as how they were oriented to their environment. Some were usually peaceful (e.g., the Hopi), while others were quite warlike (e.g., the Cherokee and the Sioux). Some even had slaves (e.g., the Aleuts). Avoid romanticizing them (see Shore, 1991, for a discussion of this issue). Literary texts by and/or about members of indigenous groups in this country deserve a regular place in our curriculum, although not necessarily at every grade level and not to the exclusion of works about the various European ethnic groups, whose members constitute a far larger number of people in this country.

4. Make sure that works with groups based on gender or gender preferences cover a range of groups, some religious, some secular, such as Thomas Merton's Seven Story Mountain, an autobiography about life in a Trappist monastery, Mary McCarthy's The Group, an autobiographical novel of life in a Catholic girls' school, Mr. Roberts, a play about life on board a ship during wartime, and Little Women, a novel about a group of sisters growing up in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Older as well as newer works with different kinds of gender groups should be represented.

5. Include literary works about the immigrant experience in this country that, across works, feature characters responding in a variety of ways to their experiences. For

example, the Italian female protagonist of The Fortunate Pilgrim and the Jewish female protagonist of Bread Givers are to a large extent liberated by their experiences in the America of the early decades of this century. Works like Everything But Money and The Adventures of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N portray the ethnic immigrant experience with great humor. Younghill Kang, a Korean immigrant, expresses the classic tensions between positive and negative experiences in his autobiography, East Meets West. On the other hand, the Italian male protagonist of Christ in Concrete and the Jewish male protagonist of Jews Without Money are alienated by their experiences as immigrants.

6. Feature literary works with male characters (regardless of race or ethnicity) who demonstrate such positive qualities as adventurousness, risk-taking, compassion, principled thinking, love of family, love of country, and heroism, as well as such negative qualities as greed, brutality, cynicism, immoral behavior, and moral confusion (for example, The Story of Johnny Applesed, Growing Up, All in the Family, and Twenty One Balloons as well as Bartleby the Scrivener and The Great Gatsby). Conversely, the program should also feature female characters, across works, who demonstrate both negative qualities, such as greed, spite, amorality, and irresponsibility, and such positive qualities as principled thinking, ambition, love of family, love of country, and professional achievement, in addition to victimization by males (for example, The Little Foxes and The Bad Seed as well as The Miracle Worker, Harriet Tubman: Conductor of the Underground Railroad, and The Awakening). Neither gender has the corner on virtue or vice (see Vitz, 1991, for a discussion of these related issues as they have been played out in recent elementary school textbooks).

7. Include literary works that feature, across works, both negative and positive characters who are members of particular ethnic, religious, or racial groups, not just one kind of character. For example, Maggie's American Dream, a story about a strong-minded black mother in a two-parent family who raised four children to become successful professionals despite racial discrimination, counterbalances The Women of Brewster Place, a bleak novel about mainly single mothers and their children in a housing project; while

the biography of Colin Powell counterbalances the negative image of black males in Color Purple. Or, as another example, the characterization of Shylock or of Fagan in British literature can be balanced by the characterization of Isaac of York in Ivanhoe or of Daniel Deronda in George Eliot's novel. Historical truthfulness is served by showing that all groups have people who can be admired or criticized, and that different authors in a country's mainstream literary tradition have held different points of view about members of particular religious or ethnic minority groups.

8. Include literary works that, across works, feature America's civic communities or "white" America (the two are not coterminous) in a variety of ways-- as supportive to protagonists and as containing decent, civic-minded people, as well as having prejudiced or mean-spirited people (e.g., To Kill a Mockingbird as well as Black Boy).

9. Include literary works about an ethnic group or about our civic communities that feature a range of themes, not just those focusing chiefly on social and political issues.

Further Considerations for Cross-Cultural Literature

There are several other criteria that should be applied in selecting cross-cultural works. Literature programs in American schools should:

10. Reflect the literary history of the English language. This means familiarizing all students with some of the choice works that were significant in the evolution of British literary culture through the nineteenth century. These are the works that inform the development of contemporary American language and literature.

11. Include works beyond those that are part of British literary culture from countries that have supplied large numbers of immigrants to this country over the past 200 years. Works from Irish literary culture as well as well-translated works from, for example, German, French, Polish, Yiddish, Czech, Italian, Hungarian, Scandinavian, Armenian, and Greek literary culture deserve a substantial place in the curriculum at all grade levels because of the extremely large numbers of Americans who trace their ancestry to these

peoples (and in some cases still come from the original country, such as contemporary Irish immigrants). According to the 1990 census, at least 75% of Americans trace their ancestry to Europe.

Works originating in Spanish-speaking countries, or in Japan, China, Korea, or other Asian countries, or in former colonies of the British, French, Spanish, or Portuguese empires in the West Indies, Africa, or South and Central America belong as well in the curriculum but to no greater extent than works originating in countries in Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe. Even if relatively new groups of immigrants are increasing at a faster rate than earlier immigrant groups, cross-cultural works from Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe have been as neglected in previous decades in our K-12 curriculum as cross-cultural works from the parts of the world from which newer groups of immigrants are coming. In some ways, works from Central and Eastern Europe (especially twentieth century works) have been and possibly still are more neglected than works from other areas of the world (or about native Indian groups) because of the status of Central and Eastern European countries during the "Cold War" and because, today, they are frequently classified with, and overshadowed by, Western European countries in multicultural literature programs, as if continents, not individual foreign cultures, were the basic unit of representation.

12. Feature works selected from another country's national literature that reflect literary merit as judged by that country's own educators. For example, Chinese works now available in English translation, such as Dream of the Red Chamber, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and Monkey Tales, are significant works in China's literary tradition and should therefore have priority when Chinese literature is being considered for inclusion in a multicultural literature program in this country. It would seem to be culturally disrespectful to select works to represent another culture to our students that a country's own educators have not selected or would be unlikely to select for its own students. At the

least, our own educators should consider choosing cross-cultural works from the perspective of educators in those cultures.

13. Cover the range of themes to be found in the literature of other countries.

Selected works from a non-Western country should deal with more than a non-Western country's troubled contact with the West if the literature of a non-Western country deals with many other themes in addition to its relationship to a Western colonizing power. For example, works about India might include Azadi, by Chaman Nahal, which deals with the deadly conflicts among Hindus, Moslems, and Sikhs in the years after independence from Great Britain. Or, works about Korea might include the autobiographical novel, Year of Impossible Goodbyes, by Sook Nyul Choi, which focuses on the author's experience as a Roman Catholic in North Korea after the separation of Korea into two countries.

Similarly, selected works from a Western country should deal with more than a Western country's social problems or its effect on a non-Western people if the Western country's literature deals, as it almost always does, with many other themes in addition to its social problems and its relationship with a non-Western people. For example, Kon-Tiki (a true adventure story) and A Doll's House (a work with social significance) together can begin to give students a better picture of Norwegians than either one alone can.

It is a disservice to the humanity of any people to romanticize them as victims or to reduce them simplistically to the role of oppressors. All countries should be depicted as complexly as their histories allow so that students grasp some notion of the individual variations in each people and do not form stereotypes about members of any country.

Deciding What To Include and What To Eliminate

In order to integrate multiethnic and multicultural literature into a school curriculum, four questions need to be discussed and worked out at the local level. (1) Who should decide what ethnic groups and what cultures should be presented in a multiethnic and multicultural literature curriculum? (2) What criteria should be used to determine

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what should be eliminated from the curriculum in order to make room for newer or different works? (3) What local considerations should be kept in mind? (4) How can the civic mission of the schools be achieved? The answers to these questions matter a great deal because they affect the quality of literary learning, its breadth, its integrity, and, ultimately, students' attitudes towards our civic culture.

(1) Who should decide what groups or cultures should be reflected in a particular curriculum? Clearly, it seems wise at the K-12 level for educators to solicit the advice of a committee representing a broad spectrum of parents and teachers and, possibly, representatives of various civic and political organizations. The committee should also reflect the range of ethnic groups in the list in the Appendix and a range of opinions in these various groups, as no groups contain monolithic thinking. Given that the schools represent an intersection of the interests of all those who pay taxes to support them as well as of the professionals who administer and teach in them, there may be no better way to avoid community clashes about the content of a school's literature program than by including a wide variety of interested people, lay citizens as well as professionals, in the decision-making process. Decisions about the ethnic and cross-cultural composition of school literature programs should reflect a broad consensus of agreement among committee members. Selection of specific works should remain in the hands of the literature teacher. It does not seem professionally appropriate to give to any group the authority to approve or "veto" specific literary texts, whether or not they focus on the particular group.

(2) What criteria should teachers use to determine what works presently in the curriculum should be eliminated to make room for classroom study of newer or different works?

1. Generally speaking, more contemporary works (those published since the 1970s) should be replaced than older works, since there seem to be fewer pre-twentieth century works than twentieth century works in most literature curricula today, according to recent research (Stotsky, 1991a). A reasonable balance between pre-twentieth century and

twentieth century works is necessary for encouraging interdisciplinary curricula with the history department, for familiarizing students with our literary past, and for helping them understand the evolution of contemporary literature.

2. Recent works flagged by respected English educators as having clear didactic intent and little literary merit could readily be replaced by works with more obvious literary merit (see, for example, the discussion by Smagorinsky, 1992, of "Chee's Daughter," a frequently anthologized short story by Platero and Miller).

3. If a curriculum contains an excessive number of works focusing on just a few ethnic groups (for example, Eastern European Jewish Americans, Black Americans, or native Indians), then some of these should be replaced by works representing the broader range in the list in the Appendix.

(3) What local considerations should be kept in mind? Individual teacher interests, local community characteristics, or regional distinctiveness have always played a role in shaping a particular school's literature curriculum, and they should continue to do so. For example, students in the State of Vermont have usually studied Vermont writers (writers who wrote about Vermont or lived in Vermont while they wrote), students in New England have traditionally studied the nineteenth century literature written in New England, while students in the South have usually read more by writers identified with the South than students in other areas of the country. Similarly, if a community contains a large number of members of a particular ethnic group, as does, for example, the State of Alaska with respect to several Indian groups and the Inuit people, then it would seem reasonable for more works about or by members of those groups to appear in the curriculum.

(4) How can the civic goals of the schools be achieved? Overall, all students in our public schools, regardless of ethnicity or religion, should be exposed to three broad groups of literary works: (1) the literature that contributes to our common civic culture (e.g., The Federalist Papers, Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, Thoreau's and Emerson's essays, or Walt Whitman's poems), (2) the remarkable diversity of ethnic literature we have as part of

this country's national literature, and (3) literary texts from a broad range of cross-cultural literary traditions--from those that serve as the foundation of our own national literature, to those of the countries and regions of the world from which our citizens have come, either in the past or today. Educators need to decide in each school system the exact proportions and priorities for these three groups. However, they might seek to maintain an overall rough balance among the three groups when adding or replacing literary works for classroom study to help the schools fulfill their responsibility for developing our students' civic identity--the basis for their sense of membership in our civic communities and for their sense of responsibility for each other as fellow citizens (see Stotsky, 1991b; Stotsky, 1991-1992; and Stotsky, forthcoming, for fuller discussion of these issues). All students deserve as broad a liberal education as possible, and educators need to take care that any local emphases do not occupy such a proportion of the curriculum that the students who are from these local or regional groups are thereby deprived of exposure to the range of religious and ethnic diversity of this country and to those works that form our common civic culture. It seems unfair and condescending to offer members of some small groups a limited literature program, while the majority of students are offered a comprehensive and liberal one.

Questions of Censorship

As some readers may have noticed, I have not suggested that teachers, parents, or others apply the criteria I have spelled out for achieving inclusiveness and avoiding stereotypes to works currently in the curriculum. These criteria were designed to guide the choice of only new works for the curriculum. I have limited their application deliberately for several reasons. First, it is unlikely that most older works or even many recent works now in the curriculum would survive the application of these criteria. For example, The Pigman, The Insiders, and West Side Story evoke a negative stereotype of young males, while Color Purple and The Women of Brewster Place create very negative stereotypes of

black males in particular. These works are in many school curricula today, and to eliminate them on the grounds that they offend specific groups of people would clearly constitute censorship. (And when teachers, who are public employees, eliminate particular literary works from the curriculum on the grounds that they offend some people in some way, that clearly constitutes censorship.) Balancing works that vary in their characterizations of different groups of people, as described earlier, is a far healthier way to counter what might be considered negative stereotypes by some groups than outright banishing of specific works from the curriculum--and arousing parental anger and the activities of civil libertarians once it is discovered.

Recently, at the behest of the school's multicultural committee, the English teachers in a private school in the Boston area removed To Kill a Mockingbird from its curriculum (after many years of popularity there) because it was now considered "demeaning" to the "children of color" in the class to take part in class discussions about the central drama in the novel--the defense of a black man by a white lawyer. This school also just removed two other works from its curriculum: Huckleberry Finn, on the grounds that its language was offensive to the "children of color" in the school, and The Education of Little Tree, because its author turned out to be a white man, not a Cherokee Indian, as was originally assumed. (Although Kruse, 1992, and others seek to distinguish among multicultural literary texts according to whether or not the texts are authored by people of the race or ethnic group portrayed in them, Gates, 1991, finds many troubling theoretical assumptions, frequent embarrassment, and overall little merit in the attempt to use authorial authenticity as a criterion in selecting multicultural literary texts.) Now a group of parents who have discovered why these works were removed are organizing to address this and other related issues of internal censorship. This incident suggests that it may be as important for teachers and parents and other citizens to have public discussions about what works are being removed from the curriculum and why as about what might be added to enrich its multiethnic and multicultural strands.

However, it is important to keep in mind that the very act of selecting works automatically excludes as well as includes. Thus, any criteria for selecting works need to be applied judiciously and can, with care, be modified. For example, Alice Walker's latest work, Possessing the Secret of Joy, deals with female "circumcision" and portrays traditional African communities and black males in particular very negatively; it thus might not be eligible for inclusion into the curriculum according to the criteria spelled out earlier. However, teachers who feel the novel is important to add to their curriculum might do so if they balanced it with another work offering a positive (and non-stereotypical) portrayal of black males, such as Charles Willie's Five Black Scholars: An Analysis of Family Life, Education, and Career, or James Comer's Maggie's American Dream.

Concluding Remarks

A final question for teachers, parents, and other citizens to keep in mind when designing the content of a multiethnic curriculum for their schools is the implication that ethnic works (those by Black-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Irish-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and so on) are not part of our national literary tradition today, but, instead, belong to non-mainstream, or "non-dominant cultural," groups. If such works as Native Son or Raisin in the Sun are seen only as the work of a particular ethnic or "cultural" group (or as the works of particular gender groups), not an integral part of our national literature, then it might seem to many students that we are implicitly suggesting that these works are by "marginalized" people and represent "marginal" literature. To designate a work as a text by a Mexican-American, Latino, Jewish-American, Irish-American, or Korean-American writer (or by a female writer) inescapably seems to marginalize it; to designate it as a text authored by an American writer does not.

Perhaps works by writers who live and write in English in any of the 50 states of the United States of America (or its territories), regardless of religion, gender, and ethnicity, should be judged only on the basis of their merit as literature and integrated within the

framework of our national literature without authorial ethnic, gender, or religious distinction. If a school's American literature curriculum were so designed, local variation could still take care of local characteristics so that this feature would not be lost. But in addition to avoiding the marginalization of many authors, a label-free curriculum could also mean that every single ethnic group would not have to be represented at every grade level so long as students could be exposed over a period of years to a rough balance between works about Americans as members of ethnic groups and works about Americans as Americans.

At present, anything labeled "multicultural" seems fraught with controversy. It may be useful to consider having parents and other members of our civic communities decide not through representatives on committees but through the political process itself whether they want a multiethnic literature course or curricular strand distinct from our mainstream or national literature, with all authors labeled appropriately according to ethnic ancestry, or whether they want an American literature program implicitly containing a balance between works about Americans as members of ethnic groups and works about Americans as Americans, but with authors labeled only as American writers. It may be possible to diminish some of the discord on multicultural education if the decision on how we integrate multiethnic literature into our school curricula, a decision that is chiefly a political one, is made legitimately and openly through the ballot box rather than *made and* perceived as a "political" bureaucratic one. Decisions on what specific works to include or exclude should remain professional ones. Making elected school board members clearly accountable for implementing the community's decision on whether authors--and by extension teachers, parents, and students--should be labeled according to ethnic ancestry, *and* without their free choice on the matter, or whether authors, teachers, parents, and students should be designated simply as Americans, would do a great deal to protect professional educators from political pressure and increasingly frequent charges of politicization and ^{to} strengthen their academic image.

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Appendix: A Sampling of Works about the American Ethnic Experience

Greek-American: The Odyssey of Kostas Volakis, by Harry Mark Petrokas; A Place for Us, by Nicholas Gage

Armenian-American: My Name is Aram, A Native American, by William Saroyan

Korean-American: East Goes West, by Younghill Kang

Bohemian- and Swedish-Americans: "My Neighbor Rosicky," My Antonia, by Willa Cather

Lithuanian-American: The Jungle, by Upton Sinclair

Eastern European Jewish-American: The Rise of David Levinsky, "The Imported Bridegroom," by Abraham Cahan; Breadgivers, by Anzia Yezierska; The Chosen, by Chaim Potok; "Envy, or Yiddish in America," by Cynthia Ozick; Call It Sleep, by Henry Roth

Georgian-American: Anything Can Happen, by George Papashvily and Helen Waite

Irish-American: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, by Betty Smith; Studs Lonigan trilogy, by James Farrell, The Last Hurrah, by Edwin O'Connor

Norwegian-American: Hunger, by Knut Hamsun; Giants of the Earth, by O.E. Rolvaag; Mama's Bank Account, by Katherine Forbes

Polish-American: Our Town, by Thornton Wilder

Slovenian-American: My Native Land, by Louis Adamic

Dutch-American: Knickerbocker Tales, by Washington Irving

Creole-American: Old Creole Days, and The Granddissimes, by George Washington Cable; The Awakening, "A Night in Acadie," "Bayou Folk," by Kate Chopin

Cajun-American: Cajun Sketches, by Lauren C. Post; Evangeline, by Henry W. Longfellow

Mexican-American: The Hunger for Memory, by Richard Rodriguez; Out of the Barrio, by Linda Chavez

Chinese-American: The Joy Luck Club, by Amy Tan; The Woman Warrior, by Maxine Hong Kingston

Japanese-American: Nisei Daughter, by Monica Sone

Black-Americans: A Raisin in the Sun, by Lorraine Hansberry; The Piano Lesson, by August Wilson; Go Tell It On the Mountain, by James Baldwin, Invisible Man, by Ralph Ellison; Black Boy, by Richard Wright; I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, by Maya Angelou

Italian-American: The Godfather, and The Fortunate Pilgrim, by Mario Puzo

Navajo Indian: Laughing Boy, by Oliver La Farge

Kiowa Indian: House Made of Dawn, The Way to Rainy Mountain, by N. Scott Momaday

Sioux Indian: The Captain of the Gray-Horse Troop, by Hamlin Garland

Chippewa Indian: Tracks, by Louise Erdrich

Mohican Indian: The Pathfinder, Last of the Mohicans, by James Fenimore Cooper