

Asian American Art in the Year 2020:
Arts Policy

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Today: Nine million Americans of Asian ancestry. Over 65 percent are foreign born. Limited numbers are in the audiences of our arts institutions and in our groupings of professional artists. Only a small percentage is American born and over 30 years of age, the principal range from which audiences and artistic product are drawn.

The Future: More Americans of Asian ancestry in the year 2020 than in 1992. In 2020 there will be 20 million Americans of Asian ancestry. Yet, more than 50 percent will be foreign born, and only a small number will be American born and over the age of 30. How many will be recipients of multiple cultures and how many will be third, fourth and fifth generation Americans? How many artists will there be? From what traditions and experiences and training will their art be based? In what context will their art be presented? What will be the role of museums and performing arts institutions, not to mention media centers, public arts agencies and university training programs in responding to these populations and the individuals who comprise its diversity? How will these populations respond as audiences? How many will attend performances and exhibitions which reflect traditions outside of their native culture? How many from outside of these cultures will want to share in their richness and bring them into their own communities, often for the first time? What will be the role of the importation of "home country" culture to

both the preservation of “home country” culture in the United States as well as its impact on “American culture” as it is defined, supported and developed in the third decade of the 21st century? What will be the impact of this “invasion” of people and cultures and investment from off-shore sources on the preservation of the American arts facilities and institutions so painstakingly developed during the latter half 20th century with public and private support? How can public policy institutions in the arts respond to cultures they do not understand, and become sensitive to new disciplines and values that they have not experienced?

These are just a few of the questions public policy specialists in the arts must address now, as we develop policies which address the needs of all of our communities as they evolve into the next century. We engage in this debate at a time when historians and cultural specialists are examining the bases of what is American culture and how it should be taught and studied. We’re not certain whether we’re in the “melting pot” or “stir-frying” our food or eating it as *sashimi*. It is in this context that publications as this volume are vitally important.

However, it is generally acknowledged that the support and interest for publications and studies about Asian Americans have only come about as the “critical mass” of Asian Americans has exceeded 10 percent of the American population in certain regions. The majority of Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans (as well as many Pilipino and Korean Americans) have been in the United States for at least four generations. The development of the West over the past one hundred years would have been markedly different were it not for the work of the Chinese American laborer or the Japanese American farmer. I was asked once to speak about the “Changing Face of Los Angeles.” I had to remind the audience that my face had been in Los Angeles for over forty years, and that other Japanese American faces had been here for over one hundred years. Possibly we were invisible before.

Yet only now with the large influx of Asian immigrants are there sufficient numbers of Americans of Asian ancestry to be considered a political or consumer force. This newly found power by coalition building is well represented by groups as the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, and the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans for Fair Reapportionment, all in Los Angeles, which have demonstrated strength in confronting issues of discrimination and representation. However, the same factors which lend to coalition

building for political purposes provide a limited basis for the development of comprehensive public policies in the arts. While issues of reapportionment and the American concept of affirmative action are based on race, the peoples of Asian ancestry who now are part of the American citizenry, while being of the same race, are of different cultures and national origin. Furthermore, these differences are even more amplified by generational differences in each ethnic group. In other words, in fact, we are all "Asian" for the census, but there is no "Asian culture," only Vietnamese culture, Malaysian culture, Chinese culture, etc. There is no Asian dance or Asian music, and no one is an Asian artist. On the other hand, we can be grouped as "Asian" artists from various cultures, and there can be an "Asian music" concert representing the traditions of various cultures. It is important that this distinction be made, lest we label without the proper knowledge. Acknowledgement of political geography is different from the acceptance of each group's cultural diversity. We, in fact, are divided by our cultural traditions, yet it is those traditions which give us the strength and resiliency to be a part of this American culture, and to fight to retain our cultural values within this broader context.

"Best of Both Worlds"

The one important exception to this concept of cultural separation is the active development of "Asian American art" by younger artists, often of third and fourth generations, whose contemporary work represents an amalgam of cultural traditions, both from "home country," as well as from other American and Asian bases. They are developing and sharing a new sensibility within their genre which represents the "Best of Both Worlds," to quote songwriter and choreographer Nobuko Miyamoto. This Asian American work is being created by the young musicians and songwriters in the Jazz fusion band "Hiroshima," by the drummers in San Jose Taiko, and by composer Jon Jang writing about Tiananmen Square, as well as by comedienne Amy Hill and filmmaker Robert Nakamura. This work represents tentative first steps by third and fourth generation artists who draw from experience and training in several cultural traditions and represents the future of Asian American work in this country as it is drawn into the mainstream, yet also pulls the stream toward itself through its strength and integrity.

And there are even younger artists now receiving their creative training in the rap music of the 1990s, the *Nihon Buyo* of *Kabuki*, the *Kulintang*,

Yamaha music schools, and the skateboard parks of our California communities. These younger artists in training are having to reach back further to gain the strength of the Asian cultural heritage, but also reach further forward to address the complexity and advanced technology of the next century. They have the advantage of pursuing art which comes from many cultures in a world in which our technology allows us to see, hear, and cross many cultural borders. The future work that comes from their talent and experiences will be revolutionary in its world view, but will also address the conservation of traditions which have spanned the past millennium.

But to address the artists and audiences who are here today, as well as to address the needs of the arts and audiences which will be developed in the future, is a daunting task. No other area of public policy is more acutely in need of a policy of diversity and pluralism in response to these demographic shifts than public arts policy. By definition, public arts policy responds to the cultural needs of its communities and artists and develops public support mechanisms, often through the creation of facilities, grants programs, and regulations and tax incentives which encourage the creation, presentation, and participation in the arts of our citizens and the cultures from which they come.

These issues are being made even more complex by the diversity of Asian Pacific American groups, and the generational and demographic differences within each national group. In the political process, there are stages of empowerment which are related to a group's power to reapportion boundaries in legislatures reflective of the racial groupings in a community. As citizenship and voter registration increase, our political power can go beyond reapportionment to the next stage, where we can use our greater numbers to elect Asian Pacific officials.

In the arts, the nine million (now) or 20 million (in 2020) Asian Pacific Americans represent both an audience pool as well as a resource for potential artists. However, the demographic, cultural, economic, social, and age differences within the entire population will prevent homogeneous attempts to respond to Asian Pacific artist or audience needs. The older, newly-arrived people will more likely cling to their traditional cultures, much as they clung to their children to keep them on the boats when they escaped their country. Younger, newly-arrived people may hold tightly on to their CD players listening to a new breed of Asian Pop Music in their native languages, while the youngest will easily toss away the

traditional costumes to dance to the sounds of Rap Music on their Boom Box. Second and third generation Asian Americans may wait in line to get those last tickets to the Frank Sinatra or Beach Boys concert, and possibly some of the fourth generation will study flower arrangement and *tai-chi*, but only to get their "heads straight." Others will fight diligently, across time zones and continents, to keep their cultural traditions and values to pass on those vital symbols, sounds, and musical instruments to the next generation. And still others will take these instruments to play a unique sound to the entire world.

Audiences will reflect this diversity and will be much broader than the scene described above. Their needs as consumers and their interests as ticket buyers will encourage them to "cross over" to become part of a larger American fabric of arts attendees. Some will not necessarily support the younger artists of their cultures, particularly those who will be seen as having "left" their cultural traditions. Others will encourage their children to leave those traditions behind and to jump fully into the searing "melting pot" of American cultural activity. In either case, there will be a tremendous time lag, much as there is from Asian Pacific efforts to elect members of our community to Congress. I was once asked how many years it would take, and the learned response given back to me was "generations." There are still only a few Asian Pacific members of Congress from the mainland of the United States.

This time lag will have a tremendous impact on arts policy-makers, as they attempt to support the audiences of the current day, while also supporting the training and development of the artists of the future. Some have even said that there will be a two-generation time lag between the arrival of the immigrant and the creation of newly developed creative work. If that is true, during this time lag, what is our responsibility to the artists, to potential audiences, and to the entire citizenry? Besides patience, what do we do while we are waiting for the work to be developed? What policies do we develop which will retain cultural traditions, as well as encourage the hastening of this process?

A Culture Rooted in Pain, Pride and Hope

Throughout American history, we have demonstrated a resiliency to accept new cultures and adopt them into our American way of life. Yet

the resiliency of our broader American culture to accept and adapt has not necessarily benefited the cultures which we have included within our sphere, often through means of force and oppression. At times Americans have attempted to change cultural forms and values and at times destroyed those cultures and art forms in the process. We have commercialized cultural symbols and utilized them as hood ornaments on our mode of transportation and mascots for our athletic teams. In the name of art, we have denigrated the color of peoples' skin and made fun of the sounds made by their voices and musical instruments.

Many of these cultures and people have been scarred by centuries of violence against them. Their traditions are lost or in jeopardy, and their communities have been subjected to exile and economic deprivation. . . . Many cultural experiences are rooted in pain as well as pride and hope. These histories, and the images and expressions that have grown from them, must be recognized and supported.¹

Yet at other times, we have formed sponsor groups to support emigre musicians as well as indigenous American art forms, such as jazz. In our finest moments, we have understood that all citizens of this country are Americans, no matter what their country of origin, or the country of origin of their parents or even great grandparents. In the early part of this century, we welcomed European immigrant artists, and this population brought with them a hunger and demand for European-style performing arts events. Our cities and counties, as well as publicly supported universities, built symphony halls and opera theatres to present this work. In the early part of the century, we encouraged the charitable income tax deduction to support cultural activities, and in the sixties, established public arts agencies to provide support for these works. We have accepted the culture that these artists shared with us, yet we wonder if the same will be true of the art which has come from the many cultures of Asia. Immigrant audiences are supporting Chinese opera, Japanese *Shigin* and Pilipino dance, yet we wonder whether the stages of those same halls and theatres will be open to the work of our traditions. Will public facilities be built to accommodate *Kabuki*, *Kulintang* and Shadow Puppets? Will university music schools add *Gagaku* and *Gamelan* to their curriculum, and will the *sitar* and *koto* be taught in music programs like the violin and trumpet? Even more complex is the

question about whether we will be able to accommodate the Asian American compositions of Jon Jang or Dan Kuramoto, let alone that future amalgam of work which is indeed Cuban-African-Chinese-Irish-Mexican-American, and which we can just call American work.

James Baldwin wrote in *Notes of a Native Son* that America is "White no longer and it will never be White again." That pointed statement written only 40 years ago couldn't predict the complexity of the America of this current decade or even this year of 1992. We are not merely shifting from one paradigm to another. Rather, we are shifting from one to many. If that is the case, what can we say about the public arts support system and its capacity to support this broader society? At one time one could say that the Baldwin quotation referred to a white versus black society, but now we have over one hundred ethnic groups who make up the mix of what it is to be American, and many of them reflect the diversity of Americans of Asian ancestry.

Our great experiment of democracy in America has survived by incorporating each of our cultures into its great fabric. We have not always been able to do it with grace or compassion, and we have made tragic mistakes about which we must be constantly reminded and diligently redress. Yet we have the resilience to accept the next dilemma and welcome the next immigrant. We omitted slaves from our Declaration of Independence, but fewer than one hundred years later endured a Civil War to guarantee (we thought) freedom. And we joined freedom rides one hundred years after that to fight for freedom once again.

We know as Americans that we will always have to give of ourselves to guarantee our own rights and the rights of others. When a woman's right to choose is taken away and a person's sexual preference results in discrimination, we know as Americans that we must speak out. We know that we must accommodate to views which are different from ours, or else the right to express our own views may be taken away. As a society, beginning with the first killing of Native Americans by the immigrant explorers, we haven't always been able to address the issues with timeliness to prevent the tragedies of violence, death, and great human suffering. Yet possibly we've had the benefit of learning from our hundreds of years of history to understand our cultural differences and the need to incorporate those differences into our communities, our broader American culture, and our laws. We've always believed in the potential of

this country to address its issues and to solve them by incorporating the broadest spectrum of the American public into that process.

But now our confidence has been shaken. We have more cultures in this country than each of us can possibly understand, and although the process of incorporation can occur quickly, we do not know if we have the resources, both public and individual, to incorporate all of these cultures into what we hope will be the America of the 21st century. We don't know if so many cultures can be amalgamated so quickly into the fabric of America. We are faced with this great American dilemma of the 21st century: Will the country depicted in the Emma Lazarus poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired. . .," succumb to the quick and easy answer of requiring everyone to accept American mass culture and to leave behind the culture which serves as the basis of their humanity, or are we willing to deal with the complexity of each of our cultures, and to work to incorporate those cultural perspectives into the broad fabric of what it is to be an American? And furthermore, are we willing to assist in the search for cultural background of those whose rush to jump into the melting pot has seared away their cultural roots?

We've been told that the arts can provide a perspective to redefine what it is to be an American. Yet this process of redefinition, or at least refinement, creates a dilemma for each of us. In this time of demographic and social change, how do we encourage the new without losing the old? How do we promote diversity without becoming unfocused? How do we fully accept each other without losing some of ourselves?

Some have suggested that we must adopt an open and color-blind approach which throws out the old standards and only accepts the standards of "artistic quality." However, these standards of "artistic quality" often ignore the standards of "cultural quality" which have existed for centuries throughout Asia and have existed for over a century within communities of Americans of Asian ancestry. To get to the level of acceptance necessary to accommodate the multitude of cultures now comprising the United States, one cannot develop an immediate color-blind approach. We must first recognize the integrity of each person's cultural heritage and the art which comes from that heritage.

Overcoming the Generational Time Lag

History informs us that it has taken several generations for the arts of newly-arrived groups or immigrants to be accepted by the “mainstream” of America, or for the newly arrived to receive sufficient training and experience in the United States to develop a form which combines their two traditions and is accepted by the broader American public. In the Japanese American community, this can be said about the achievements and success of Minoru Yamasaki, architect, George Tsutakawa, sculptor, and George Nakashima, furniture designer, architect and craftsman. Each was able to blend their Japanese sensibilities and perspective with their American and European training to reach a level of accomplishment as artists in the United States. Others have been able to gain national and international recognition when their training and subsequent work have reflected a western or European sensibility, again combined with Japanese traditions, such as in the case of Isamu Noguchi, who worked with Brancusi at a young age. Native-born Asians have gained success in the United States when they have brought with them the training from their own cultural traditions and combined it with western training. On occasion, a classically trained Asian artist such as Ravi Shankar is able to combine his work with other western musicians to gain success, but generally speaking, it is the second and third generation Asian American who will gain artistic success in the United States, and it is the second and third generation members who will be the audience for the broader productions. These artists of talent have overcome the generational time lag described above and succeeded against all odds. It was due to their individual vision, based in their own cultural traditions, often assisted by training from outside their culture, and then nurtured and supported by the entirety of American cultural, ethnic and religious groups. This, then, is the context in which artistic work must be assisted:

- Acknowledgement and support of native cultural traditions, often brought to this country at great sacrifice, and often involving spiritual and religious references and elements. This must be carried on for generations.
- The economic resources and systems to sustain those traditions given the dire circumstances of many new immigrant groups. We

cannot let cultural traditions slip away, yet we must also allow the popular to play its role in encouraging traditional cultural activity.

- Encouragement of training, both from within and traditional cultural systems and the broader society.
- Encouragement of audience development to broaden the thinking of Americans about arts and culture to include traditional cultures.
- Support for the development of the new and risk-taking projects which push the boundaries of accepted cultural norms (both traditional and contemporary culture).

Los Angeles is today seen as one of the most culturally diverse American cities and a potential prototype of the American diversity of the 21st century. In a report to Mayor Tom Bradley in 1987, the Los Angeles 2000 Committee stated, "More different races, religions, cultures, languages and people mingle here than in any other city in the world."² The Committee went on to note that to ignore diversity risks an increasingly divided community with intensifying political conflicts, escalating crime, shrinking economic opportunity, racial isolation, and ultimately, marked deterioration in the quality of life. Instead, the Committee urged a view of diversity as a positive force and recommended that we embrace it, nurture it, and draw strength from it:

. . . think of the diversity. . . as a broad and complex system of cultures—each with its own beliefs, social structures, language and thought patterns, and art forms. These cultures, and particularly their art forms. . . offer ways to know and respect each other, thereby enriching our diversity. Therefore, we must recognize the essential role that the arts and culture play in building a sense of community. Through art and culture a community identifies itself and sees itself reflected in the greater whole.³

A public policy, then, must be designed to strengthen our arts and cultural institutions. Such a policy would embrace a dual challenge: first, to encourage contributions to the arts from the city's many ethnic and

culturally specific groups, and second, to broaden existing centralized arts organizations.⁴

Yet, today's American public "arts policy" often has a narrow view of what is art. Music is often defined as that which is played by symphonic orchestras and quality media what is broadcast by public broadcasting. In contrast, most cultures generally define art as the work which reflects the spirit and enhances the soul. The oldest forms of arts support, particularly in Asia, reflected the perceptions of a people about their culture and the importance of the sounds and symbolisms which reinforced and enhanced that culture. Each individual had a strong appreciation of culture, and only the work which reflected that quality received support. *Our Many Voices, A New Composition*, an interim report of the "2000 Partnership," the successor organization to the "Los Angeles 2000," stated:

Current American arts policy, however, is based on an idea of 'a superior culture.' This rests on a European definition of art, embracing that which hangs in the museum or is performed in the concert hall or the theatre; or is secular or derived from court tradition; or is contemporary and professional. And even though this policy is intended to serve our pluralistic society, we actually place little value on art that is based in another cultural tradition or is derived from a social, communal, occupational, religious, or family context. In practice, the policy is limited by design. The funding systems, cultural facilities, and the managers are simply inappropriate to serving these diverse forms of cultural expression. As a result, the support for different cultural voices—the real challenge of pluralism—has been sporadic and inadequate. Only as a result of constant political pressure has arts policy been grudgingly augmented and re-tooled to encourage the variation in regional and cultural customs and practice found throughout the country.⁵

A Melting Pot—Or Something Else?

At issue is the question of whether the United States is indeed the proverbial melting pot, or whether another analogy is appropriate. As a young child, when I learned about music and art from school textbooks, I

learned that the Japanese prints which my grandmother carefully displayed on the walls at home were not “real” art. I learned that *ikebana* and *bonsai* were hobbies, not art. I learned that the *barrio* mural painted by my classmate’s uncle wasn’t art either, and that the jazz played by our neighbor down the street wasn’t music. As a child, I mourned the loss of my culture and parts of myself, as my cultural symbols and those of my friends were systematically eliminated from our experience. Instead, my school taught me about the great European composers and musicians. Of the Americans I did learn about, I heard Copeland and not Ellington, and of course all the authors I read were men. Those days are not so long ago. I wonder if 25 years from now if my children will remember only learning about Shakespeare, Bradbury and Herman Melville, and not about Willa Cather and Chikamatsu.

Rather than the melting pot, some have suggested that the pertinent analogy for the future would be that of a stew, bouillabaisse, or mixed salad, in which each culture stays intact, but mixes with the influences of others to develop a culture which is greater than the sum of its parts. However, this American culture is much more complex than can be described or captured within a single paradigm.

Many now suggest an America which functions within multiple paradigms, envisioning not just one bowl or pot cooking on the stove, but a number of diverse pots, both large and small, each reflecting the diverse cultures of America. There might be big containers to accommodate the stews, bouillabaisse and salads, but also smaller containers, in which specific cultures and tastes would choose to be nurtured, preserved, and modified, prior to (and possibly instead of) joining the larger kettles. There would be pots which would represent the Mulligan Stew of several cultures, and there would be some plates with dividers upon which someone would make their selections from the Smorgasbord of tastes and flavors. This model would reflect both an integration of cultures, as well as a process of selective separation, nourishment and sustenance. There would, of course, be many cooks, and each culture would be integral to several of the pots. It is important to note that none of these models is absolute. Rather, no one actually lives only in one culture, and as Guillermo Gomez-Peña says, all of us live on the borders. Each of us would actually live in several “pots.” Most people travel back and forth from culturally specific to centralized environments within the course of each day and week. Many of us live within multiple paradigms, understanding

(both consciously and subconsciously) the modes of behavior acceptable and supported within each paradigm. We each live in worlds that contain multiple cultures. I would suggest that this vision of America is the one which must operate in this last decade of the 20th century and into the 21st century. A foreign dignitary visiting the United States recently remarked that the America of the 1990s is in fact the world in microcosm. He said: "If America is successful in bringing its people together, maybe the world has a chance." These are our questions of the 21st century. Can we bring the American people together, and if we can, does that mean that the world has a chance?

This concept is particularly important for Asian American groups whose population base in the United States is still relatively small. Each is attempting to preserve its own cultural symbols, practices and arts while also attempting to live in and adapt to American systems. Many people who have come to this country from Asia did not come to leave their culture, but rather came because the political and economic strife of their country did not support their culture. They wish to bring their economic and cultural context to the United States, where our freedoms provide an environment in which their cultures can survive. They come here, hoping for support, but they see the omnipresent mass culture impacting upon their lives and most particularly on the values, ethics and arts of their children. Newly-arrived immigrant families seem to be "assimilating" more quickly, or in other words, "leaving their culture behind" more urgently. Newly-arrived groups look to public agencies for support, but meet a reluctance to change by those in policy-making positions. Yet the urgency of their concerns is created not by the calendar of arts politics but by the imperative of cultural survival. Cultural equity becomes a matter of utmost importance when "the sands of our cultures are slipping through our fingers."

As one reviews the adverse role that public policy in the arts has had on newly-arrived groups throughout American history, one might be prone to suggest that Asian cultural traditions would be better off in a society in which government were "neutral" about culture, and did not impose public intervention. Throughout history, each of America's cultural and ethnic communities has persevered to maintain its own traditions, often attempting to counteract the actions of the government or other public systems. Public policies have encouraged and at times even mandated the genocide of

various Native American nations, the separation of the African American family through the slavery system, prohibitions against speaking our native tongues in the public school system, and the destruction of Japanese American cultural materials in the concentration camps of World War II. Yet communities have established their own internal structures, without public assistance, to support cultural preservation through churches, social centers and fraternal organizations, and have responded with their own political initiatives to counteract “no-choice” and English-Only initiatives.

The large increase in the Asian American population has, in recent years, increased the awareness by government agencies, elected officials, and other arts policy-makers to our growing numbers, resulting in the appropriation of Asian American work into “mainstream” organizations and the encouragement of outreach programs and audience development programs. One example is the “workshopping” of Asian American plays at resident theatre companies, with the result that some have been produced on the “mainstage.” Some might say that these centralized “mainstages” are where all the best work should be produced and that appropriation has resulted in greater cultural diversity. Yet many cultural groups have expressed concern regarding the issue of access versus control, as well as matters of cultural imperialism. Several years ago, most would have been pleased with the mere access to the facility, no matter who produced the work. Now, after a history of unfortunate experiences, Asian Americans are asking for control of their own cultures and cultural symbols. They’ve seen the work of the best Asian American playwrights “re-worked” by directors who don’t understand their culture, and they’ve seen centuries-old Asian traditions trivialized by unknowing producers. In the visual arts, they are demanding that Asian American curators and institutions be involved in the selection of work for exhibitions and have central roles in the interpretation of those materials for their own and broader communities. Their concern is expressed in *An American Dialogue*:

. . .when the content of one culture is left solely to another to express, without any consultation with that culture’s community, then the result is usually distorted, unintentionally or by design. This outcome is even more likely—and more threatening—if the

two cultures are at odds: haves and have-nots, majority and minority, victor and vanquished. . . . In short, no culture can survive intact if its interpretation and transmission are controlled by people outside the culture.⁶

Responding to Cultural Diversity

To establish effective public arts policy to support culturally diverse communities will require recognition at each level of government of both the importance of the inclusion of Asian American audiences and artists in the “mainstream” of cultural activity within a community, as well as the support of culturally specific communities to preserve and present their own artistic work. *Our Many Voices* recommends a dual policy track which is based on the following conceptual framework:

1. There is a fundamental right to culture—to honor each person’s unique heritage, including the right to express and communicate, to practice customs, to be treated with respect.
2. Cultural diversity is a positive social value, the source of our cultural vitality. It is a well of richness from which to draw new social forms and possibilities.
3. Cultural life requires active participation, not just passive consumption of cultural products. Amateurs and professionals are equally weighted ends of a necessary continuum.
4. No culture or active subculture can survive if its interpretation and transmission is controlled by someone outside the culture.
5. In contemporary society, the concept of a “pure culture” is specious. Human society and behavior is varied and deeply textured, and present cultural practices have multiple cultural antecedents.
6. Cultural equity demands the fair distribution of cultural resources and support throughout the society.⁷

How then can this be implemented in our various Asian American communities and at the national and state policy levels?

Our Many Voices goes on to recommend means by which new policies can be evaluated. The outcomes would be deemed a success if:

1. The amount of multicultural and culturally specific services is increased and the institutions that provide these services are strengthened.
2. The composition of the aggregate audience for the arts more closely reflects the demographic reality of Los Angeles.
3. The audiences for the arts are encouraged to explore the richness and diversity of Los Angeles' cultural heritage.
4. The ultimate criterion for success is the condition of choice:
 - a. Is the control of the cultural symbolism held within the community?
 - b. Do policy decisions increase the conditions of cultural choice?
 - c. Is the public good kept in trust by these actions? Are the public facilities governed and used by, and accessible to, the many? Does public financing support the voices and aspirations of the many?⁸

It should be noted that these comments do not suggest a new tribalism. Rather, the suggestion of separation provides a basis from which we can then join together, as we must develop a common agenda with all people. Whether we "live on the hyphen" or not, we are all Americans, no matter what our national origins. We each live in communities and neighborhoods, and we each have a part to play in the cultural future of this country. We must find that common ground of working together. Racism is not a white person's disease, and sexism is not the exclusive domain of males. We all have misperceptions about one another and we need to dispel them as best we can to develop a truly multicultural society. These misperceptions are even greater about new immigrant groups from parts of the world we have learned little about from our schools, and from cultures which have not been incorporated into our

arts institutions. It becomes therefore even more important that we learn about each other's values and cultures.

Our previous perceptions have often come from "old stories." Today, however, we must create and listen to the new stories. To take the final statement from *An American Dialogue*:

Our job, then, is to make certain that the new stories that represent our common experiences are developed as creatively as we know how, and that they touch as many people as possible. If we succeed, our lasting legacy will be the work of those most creative among us—the artists who are best able to see beneath the surface of our actions and make order of our infinite complexity.⁹

Notes

1. National Task Force on Presenting and Touring the Performing Arts, *An American Dialogue* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Performing Arts Presenters, 1989).
2. Los Angeles 2000 Committee, *LA 2000: A City for the Future* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles 2000 Committee, 1987).
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. The 2000 Partnership, *Our Many Voices: A New Composition* (Los Angeles: The 2000 Partnership, n.d.).
6. National Task Force, *An American Dialogue*.
7. The 2000 Partnership, *Our Many Voices*.
8. *Ibid.*
9. National Task Force, *An American Dialogue*.