"Border Lies: Race, Identity and Citizenship," the 1999 CSWS RIG-A-Fair, drew more than 220 people to campus for an invigorating set of presentations and conversations about affirmative action, immigration, race theory, and citizenship and identity. Then CSWS Director Sandra Morgen described the conference as a beginning, rather than a culmination, of dialogue around the critical issues of race and society. "We want to sustain the conversation around race," she said. "Through ongoing work with other campus units, we want to ensure that the campus has ample opportunities to think about the issues raised at the conference."


**Patricia Penn Hilden, Professor of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley**

Asked about the borders that separate Mexico and the United States, Carlos Fuentes replied: "A big difference, I think, is memory. I have called the U.S. the United States of Amnesia. They tend to forget their own history. So when I am speaking about a Protestant republic, a republic based on democratic principles of self-government, let me not forget that it is also a republic founded on violence. That it is also a republic founded on the exclusion of important groups."

So, "violence" and "exclusion," the unholy twins upon which United States identity rests. "We the People" were born in 1623 when the English "Pilgrims" landed and the origin tale began to be written. Violence was their luggage, wrapped in the Protestant Bible with its language of forgetting. An example:
On the night of June 5, 1637, John Mason led English troops to attack a village of Pequot Indians. As the Pequots awoke inside their wood and straw houses, Mason and his men set everything on fire, shooting or hacking to death those who tried to flee.

This is the violence out of which our United States is born, resting on the exclusion by race of the first in what has become a large group of U.S. "others." I'd like to suggest that this unacknowledged past, this total absence of historical memory, creates borders, not only around "We the People," but also, devastatingly, in the minds of the "others" themselves.

**Dorothy Roberts, Professor of Law, Northwestern University School of Law**

I want to talk about the borders of liberty in this country and look at the question of who falls within and who falls without those borders. And I want to begin with three stories about three women. The policies at play in these stories—prosecuting women who use drugs during pregnancy, distributing Norplant in poor communities, placing family caps on welfare mothers—have two central features in common. One is that they affect the reproduction decision-making of the women involved. Or to be more specific, they all have the affect of deterring these women from having children. They're all government policies aimed at stopping women from having children. Another central feature is that they all affect a disproportionate number of black women. None of these policies, though, is considered a violation of liberty. It's not seen as any problem under the Constitution. They're not seen at all to violate the idea that women are supposed to have control over their reproduction. So I want to look at these three policies and the reproductive lives of poor black women as a context for exploring the borders of liberty and to make a case that we need to add social justice to our understanding of liberty.
Lydia Chavez, Associate Professor of Journalism, University of California, Berkeley

Californians were looking around for someone to blame for the state's dismal economy and immigrants seemed like a natural place to go. [The anti-immigration measure] Prop. 187 was an issue that moved white males to go to the polls to vote. Interestingly enough, although many white women also favored Prop. 187, many stayed home. You didn't see the going to the polls in 1994 by women as you had seen in 1990. Now from the beginning women were the group most able to take advantage of affirmative action. [But when Prop. 209 came up in 1996, the opponents' polling told them] that there's a large group of professional women who no longer associate their success with affirmative action. There is this large group of [non]professional women who aren't even quite sure what affirmative action is in terms of their lives, but in terms of their husbands' lives and their sons' lives, they are concerned that it will impact them negatively. And then there's a whole group of Latina women who think affirmative action is welfare.

I think that women failed in this campaign. Now they're not the group that immediately is going to see the greatest impact from the loss of affirmative action because they are more in the society. But they are the group, in a sense, that had the power to stop this but were unable to wield that power.

Lynn Stephen, Professor of Anthropology and International Studies, University of Oregon

Border rearrangements, entrances, exits, secret trap-doors, invisible suspension bridges and holes in the wall have existed in the fabric of United States foreign policy and immigration policy for quite some time. Borders are legally open and closed, the right for non-citizens and non-residents to work and live in the United States has followed a logical track tied to U.S. foreign interest and shifting domestic labor needs. As the need for temporary low-paid labor has shifted through the century, U.S. immigration policy has followed it. While there is legal global
circulation of capital, information, goods, and services, the global circulation of people is not acknowledged in formal economic policy. It is, however, scripted into national politics. Current U.S. immigration policy has little to do with the realities of economic integration between Mexico and the U.S.—the fact that there is not an oversupply of agricultural laborers in the U.S., for example—but has a lot to do with domestic American politics.

Shari Huhndorf, Assistant Professor of English, University of Oregon

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, World's Fairs in particular provided key opportunities for the dominant culture to define America for vast audiences. In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago provided one such opportunity. The World's Columbian Exposition celebrated only slightly belatedly the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World. This was, of course, a thoroughly European vision of the nation's origins, a triumphant story of expansion in which the millions of Native inhabitants of the continent functioned merely as incidental players or perhaps, more commonly, as savage obstacles to the inevitable spread of Western civilization. The parallels to the story of Columbus celebrated at the exposition were unmistakable. The midway frequently dubbed the "terra incognita" bore distinct similarities to the wild and barbaric land that Columbus had found and conquered, according to the story. If Columbus and his successors had transformed savagery into civilization, so, too, could the white middle classes of the nineteenth century secure their own racial and cultural class dominance. In fact, spectators on the midway enacted colonial relationships just by gazing upon these spectacles of "otherness" designed for their entertainment.

Mia Tuan, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Oregon

There's a perception or set of stereotypes of what an Asian American is supposed to be like. And when Asian ethnics don't
fit that, there's a kind of disharmony or dissonance there. They're seen as not really Asian and not really acting Asian enough. And they get this from non-Asians as well as Asians alike.

There's a lot of weaving, reweaving, and even reinventing notions of what it means to be Asian American or Chinese or Japanese American. Why is this so important and how does this tie into the notion of borders? I think the most important part is that instead of trying to conform to gain acceptance, in other words, kind of knocking on the border door and saying, "please let me join you on the other side," what I see happening with the individuals that I [interviewed in my study] is a reconfiguring of the borders, as opposed to trying to meet the criteria and gain acceptance that way. It's trying to change the criteria or bend the border a bit to include their experiences on their own terms.

Robin Morris Collin, Professor of Law, University of Oregon

Consumption for consumption's sake is an element of our economic policy. Externalize waste and pollution away from the corporate source. We have, throughout our history, made a deal with business. You come and develop and we'll take care of the cost of waste and pollution. All of a sudden, though, you see, there are some institutions of government who are saying, "You know, we think that's a bad idea. That was kind of a bad deal and now we want to change it." That's what the tobacco settlement is about. Because you see, we used to subsidize tobacco—still do subsidize tobacco—but all of a sudden the state A.G.s have said that's a dumb deal. And so what we want to do is force the people who are generating some of this poison and toxin to internalize the true cost, the health damage from tobacco. Let me suggest to you that state A.G.s have finally got the right idea—they haven't done enough—but they're getting the right idea. And that's an idea that needs to spread. No more allowing polluters to externalize the true cost of waste and pollution onto poor people, primarily, or people of color.