



# The Forgotten Ones: A Sociological Study of Anglo and Chicano Retardates

*Anne-Marie Henshel*

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## **The Forgotten Ones: A Sociological Study of Anglo and Chicano Retardates** Anne-Marie Henshel

In *The Forgotten Ones*, originally published in 1972, Anne-Marie Henshel examines the lives of a group of persons living within the community who had been diagnosed at one time or another as mentally retarded. The analysis makes use of three sets of comparisons—Anglo and Chicano, married and single, male and female—and the subjects in each category are analyzed in terms of personal characteristics, employment situation, material possessions, living conditions, family background, social activities, and contacts with “officials”—including the police. In addition, Henshel gives a detailed presentation of the conjugal lives of the married subjects: mutual feelings, marital satisfaction, reproduction, parenthood.

All data were gathered through three in-depth interviews with each subject, at intervals of about three months. In the case of a married respondent, the spouse was interviewed simultaneously, whenever possible, but separately. Interviewer was matched with subject by sex and ethnicity. Although the respondent’s reports were complemented by the interviewer’s perception, emphasis was placed on the individual’s perception of his or her own situation, and the data were analyzed accordingly.

The predominant themes are cultural differences between the two ethnic groups, especially in marriage, the relative superiority of the married over the single, the advantages and disadvantages of the male and the female in view of sex-role norms, and some of the problems with which the respondents are besieged—on the whole, problems very similar to those of other poor people. All-pervasive are social isolation, loneliness, lack of money, deficient education, poor physical appearance, failure in birth-control efforts, the presence of handicapped children, and the need for humane guidance and training.

Suggestions for improving relations with individuals once labeled retardates are presented in the last chapter.

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