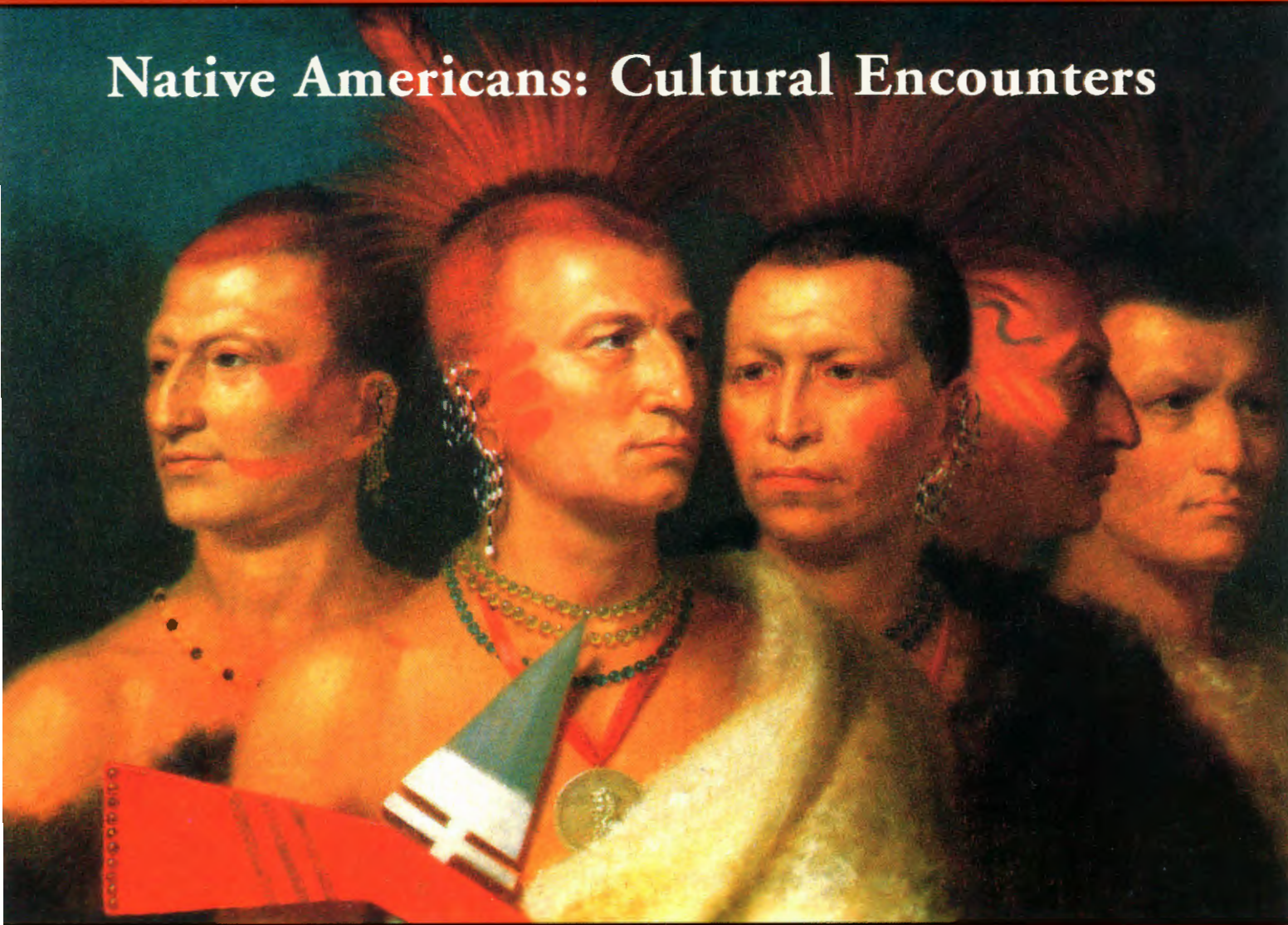


# AMERICAN STUDIES JOURNAL

Number 46/Winter 2000

**Native Americans: Cultural Encounters**



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# Editor's Note

Lutherstadt Wittenberg, October 2000

Two short notes about our subscription policy:

Dear Readers,

Germans are truly fascinated with Native Americans. As children they play Cowboy and Indian, later in life they read or watch about the adventures of *Winnetou* (of whom, by the way, Americans have never heard) or *Hawkeye*. Radebeul and Bad Segeberg are places the modern pilgrim of Native American fascination has to visit, the former as the birthplace of Karl May, the latter as the place where *Winnetou* and Old Shatterhand ride into the sunset anew every Summer. For Germans and most other Europeans, Indians symbolize freedom, grace, tradition and being one with nature. However, these images of Native Americans rest on stereotypes of pre-20<sup>th</sup> century encounters with European settlers and are as distorted as they are a European invention.

With the current issue of the *American Studies Journal*, "Native Americans – Cultural Encounters," we would like to present a more representative picture of America's indigenous peoples. Therefore, the articles included in this issue range from missionary efforts of German ministers among Northeastern tribes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the problem of acquainting non-Native American students with the culture and history of indigenous peoples.

Many of our subscribers have asked if it was necessary to send the postcards attached to every issue of the *American Studies Journal* to renew the subscription. This, of course, is not necessary. We only need a notification if your mailing address has changed.

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Yvonne Walter,  
Assistant Editor, *American Studies Journal*  
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Lutherstadt Wittenberg



**ZUSAS**

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# *The State of Native America at the End of the Twentieth Century*

J. Kelly Robison

Several months ago, a German acquaintance of mine asked if there were any "Wild Indians" left in the United States. Using the term "wild" to describe any group of people is problematic, at best. "Indian" also has problems, though these are easier to work around than "wild." One can excuse the ignorance of my acquaintance as simply a lack of knowledge. Most Germans receive very little formal education about Native Americans and what they do know is often derived from the novels of Karl May and his "Winnetou" series of books, later adapted to the movie screen, or the late movies, which are usually "spaghetti" westerns from the nineteen-sixties. The popular conceptions of Native Americans within the general American population is perhaps similar and derived from similar sources, but that is the topic of a different paper. The underlying conception that led to my acquaintance's question is the popular misconception that all Native Americans wear feather headdresses, live in tepees and fought cowboys. Few Native groups wore the classic war bonnet or lived in tepees, even before the reservation period. Native American cultures have been varied and diverse for thousands of years. The Native population is assuredly lower than in the pre-contact period and the number of Native groups is smaller, but there still exists much variety and heterogeneity among Native peoples despite attempts by the United States government and others to assimilate them. When stereotypes of modern Native Americans are brought forward, these usually manifest themselves in visions of poor Indians living on reservations, which are on lands no one else wanted. Modern Native Americans are often stereotyped as drunks or succumbing to the pressure of gamblers to open their reservations to casinos. One place to start in order to disprove these stereotypes is the statistical data. What follows is not an interpretive essay in the classic scholarly vein, but an informative one that provides a picture of the state of Native America at the end of the Twentieth Century based on current statistical data.

Most German students receive very little information on the first inhabitants of what is now the United States. In Germany, as in the United States, high school students learn about the society of the land whose language they are studying. However, the most-used textbook for German students of English devotes only a handful of pages to Native Americans. Two sections of the *English G: Neue Ausgabe* mention Native Americans in brief and an entire section is devoted to Native Americans. However, within this particular section, approximately three pages address Native Americans in general and approximately five more pages provide information on the Navajo in more depth. While the book provides some basic facts about Native peoples, much of this is generalization that may apply to one group but not to another. One of the unstated purposes of this section of the Native American section of the book is to make the students look at the stereotypes of Native Americans and correct them. Eight pages of total text can only do so much and fails to provide the student with the breadth that is Native America.<sup>1</sup>

The authors of school readers are not the only ones who generalize about Native Americans. The United States government does as well. The U.S. census, for statistical purposes, divides Americans into racial categories based on ancestral origin. The census, and other organizations who also need to make statistical calculations based on race, use five main categories of racial classification: white, black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American. To which group one belongs is usually a matter of self-identification, a method that the U.S. Bureau of the Census uses.<sup>2</sup> This system is fraught with difficulties, especially in a multi-ethnic society such as the United States. The very term "race" is over-used and ill-defined, particularly since researchers are now examining population differences at the genetic level, finding that "race" has no substantive bio-genetic base.<sup>3</sup> Despite the problems with the classification

system, it is the most commonly used system and, for the sake of simplicity, "race" will continue to be used in this paper.

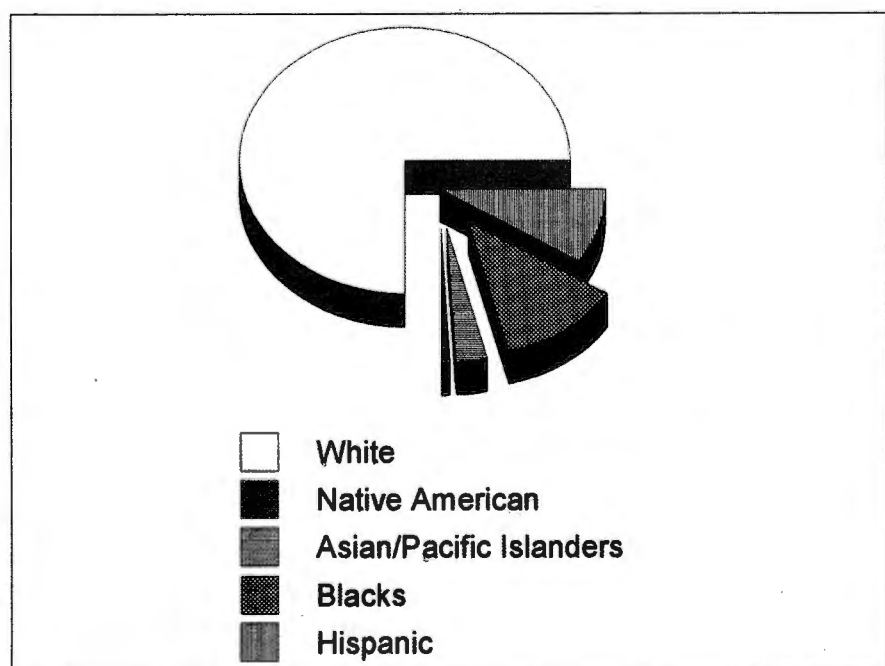
In historical literature, within popular discourse, and even within modern governmental writings, the term "tribe" is used to delineate ethnic identity among Native Americans. "Tribal" is often used to describe the governments of those Native groups as well. In anthropological terms, "tribe" has a specific meaning, one which is generally not used, or should not be used, to describe present-day Native groups. Oftentimes one reads of Native American "nations." This term is a more appropriate one to use to describe Native groups. It does not have the same connotation as the modern Nation-State as a European would think of it; a geo-political entity defined by a given land base and centralized government but perhaps featuring an ethnically heterogeneous rather than homogeneous population. Rather, "nation," as used by Native groups denotes a society whose members are of a particular homogeneous ethnic makeup. The political characteristics of the government are, in this case, more or less irrelevant.

The United States Federal government recognizes 556 Native American nations or, in the wording of the U.S. government, "tribal entities."<sup>4</sup> There exist, however, 237 "entities" that are currently petitioning for recognition by the federal government. The most recent successful petitioners for recognition were the Pokagon Potawatomi Indians of Indiana and Michigan, who received their official status as a tribal entity in 1994.<sup>5</sup>

According to the United States census, there were 1.959 million Indians living in the United States in 1990. In the same year, Americans of all ethnic groups numbered almost 249 million. In other words, Indians made up less than 1% of the general American population. Blacks, on the other hand, made up 12% and Hispanics counted as 9%

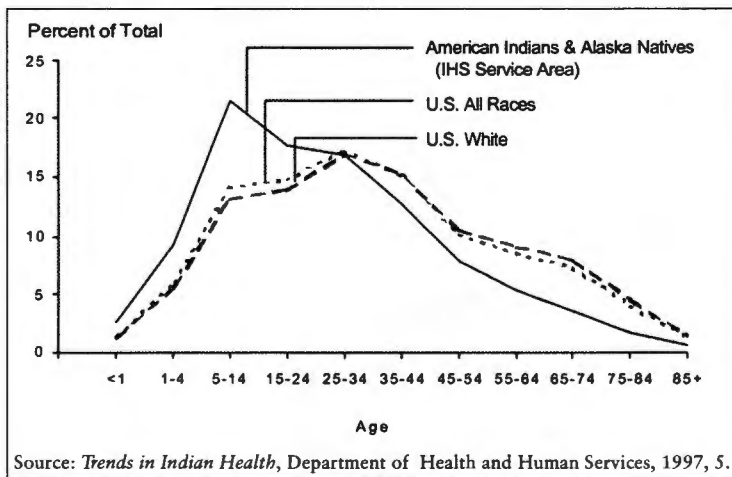
of the total population of the United States. The census listed Asians as 3% and whites as slightly higher than 75% of the population. Indians, the first Americans, are a minority among the minorities.<sup>6</sup>

The tally of 1% of the American population and a total population of 1.959 million is small compared to the pre-Columbian North American population of Indians, which has been variously estimated as between ten and seventy-five million.<sup>7</sup> Diseases brought to the Americas by Europeans devastated the Indian population and it has only been within the past century that the population has risen rather than fallen.<sup>8</sup>



The current projections of population growth show that Native Americans have one of the highest growth rates among any racial group in the United States. While the projected growth rate between 1990 and 2000 for white Americans is only 6.3%, the projected growth rate for Native Americans is 13.7%, slightly more than black Americans, whose projected growth rate is 12.9%. Hispanics and Asians, however, have the highest projected growth rates with 29% and 34.3% respectively.<sup>9</sup> Much of the increase in population is due to a much higher birth rate among Native Americans than the American population as a whole. For the general population, the birthrate is 15.5. The Native American birthrate is 65% higher with 25.6.<sup>10</sup>

The higher birth rate among Native Americans is reflected in the fact that Indians are a younger population than the general American populace. Within the overall American population, 22% are younger than fifteen years of age. Among Native Americans, that percentage, 33%, is 10% higher. 13% of the American population is over 65 years of age, while among Native Americans, only 6% are of retirement age. The median age of Americans in general is 32.9 years of age. In contrast, the median age of Native Americans is 24.2.<sup>11</sup>



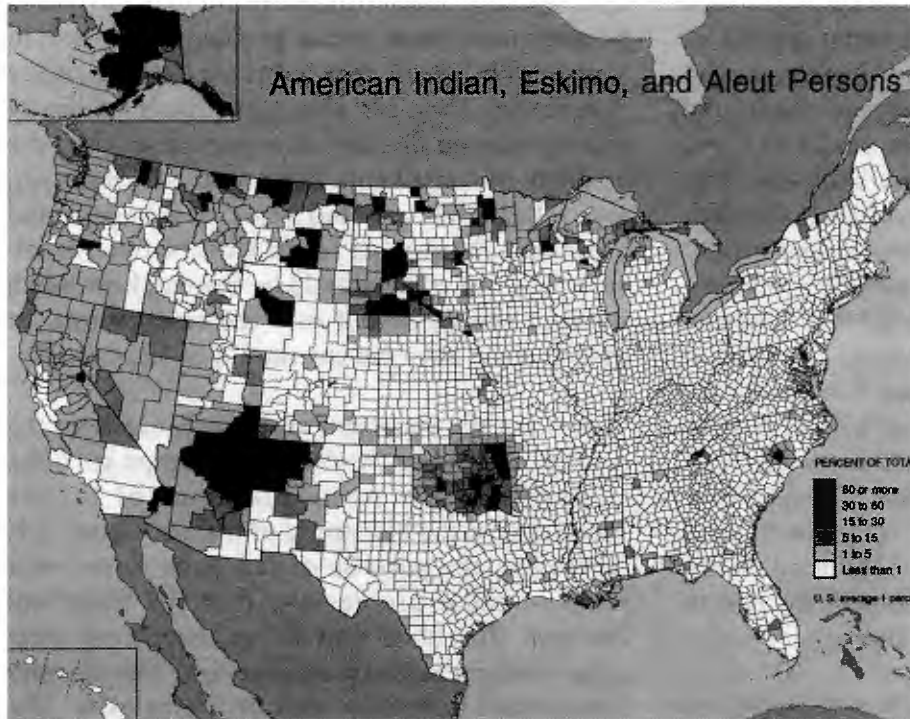
But, the Native American population has not increased in each tribe evenly. Some tribes have gained in population more than others. The largest tribe in the United States today is the Cherokee Nation, with 369,035 members as of the 1990 census. Since the 1980 census shows that the Cherokee population was 232,080, the 1990 figure represents a 19% increase. The second largest tribe in the U.S. in 1990 was the Navajo Nation with 225,298 members, an increase of 35% from 158,633 in 1980. The Yaqui tribe of Arizona still ranks within the top twenty-five largest tribes in the United States, despite a population that, as of 1990, was only 9,838. This figure is close to double the 1980 census, however, which recorded only 5,197 Yaquis. So, the difference between the 1980 and 1990 figures represents a 45% increase in population. None of the top twenty-five largest tribes in the United States reported a decrease in population between 1980 and 1990.<sup>12</sup> While all racial groups in the U.S. increased in population numerically, Native Americans as a group far outstripped any other group in percentile population increase.

Most Native American tribes, indeed the majority of the Native American population, live west of the Mississippi River. Most reservations are located in the west of the United States. Most tribes who live on sections of their original homelands reside in the west. Tribal land ownership east of the Mississippi River comprises a total of almost 2.2 million acres. Individually-owned land that comes under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs adds approximately 140,000 acres. In the west, the tribes own over 43 million acres of land and individual land ownership, again under BIA jurisdiction, affixes 10 million acres to this amount.<sup>13</sup>

The location of the majority of the Native American population stems from the removal programs of the early nineteenth century. The United States Congress, during the presidency of Andrew Jackson, gave the executive *carte blanche* to remove those tribes who still remained east of the Mississippi. There were indeed many tribes and a fairly large population in the east, though precise figures are not available. During the period 1830 to 1845, ninety-five treaties of removal were signed between the U.S. government and representatives of the various tribes. Many of these treaties were signed under duress or by individuals who did not represent the majority of the tribe. By 1845, very few Native Americans remained in the east and most of those either lived in hiding, such as those who are now known as the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, or fought against removal, such as the group of the Seminole.<sup>14</sup>

What would probably surprise most Germans, and perhaps many Americans as well, is that the majority of Native Americans do not live on reservations. Of the total Native American population, 858,700 live in rural area (areas with less than 2,500 people) and slightly over 1.1 million live in urban areas.<sup>15</sup> Native Americans are a mostly urban population. The migration of Native Americans to the cities expanded rapidly during and after World War II. During the war, many people left the reservations to either enter the armed forces or to find work in the booming factories of war-time. Immediately after the war, the Indian Relocation Program moved many Native Americans from the reservations to cities

as part of an attempt to assimilate them and remove the “dependent nation” or wardship status of the tribes. During this period, thousands of Native American families were moved to cities, especially western cities such as Los Angeles.<sup>16</sup>



While Native Americans are the smallest major ethnic minority in the United States, they are also the poorest. The United States has one of the highest median household incomes in the world, ranking sixth. The United States is on par with Germany, each having slightly more than \$30,000 in median household income. At \$36,000, Switzerland has the highest median income.<sup>17</sup> Native Americans live far below the median level for the United States with a \$19,897 income. In the United States, 13.1% of the total population lives below the poverty level. Thirty-one point six percent (31.6%) of Native Americans live below that level.<sup>18</sup> This figure is actually an increase from 24% in 1980. Almost 27% of Native American households are headed by single mothers,<sup>19</sup> which may not be a clear indication but perhaps is a good clue to why the poverty level is so high. The percentage of households headed by women in general in the United States was approximately 16.5% as of 1990.<sup>20</sup>

The unemployment rate among Native Americans is exceptionally high. In 1990, while the

general unemployment rate was 5.6%,<sup>21</sup> the overall unemployment rate of Indians living on the reservations was 35%. However, unemployment, like population or most other statistics, varies according to region and reservation. In the

Pueblo of Cochiti, located just off the freeway between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, the unemployment rate stood at 6%. This low unemployment rate, consistent with the national average, is understandable considering the location of the reservation. Albuquerque is a large city and Santa Fe maintains a thriving tourist trade. Cochiti reaps the benefits of both economic situations. Also in the Southwest is the Ute Mountain Reservation. The Utes there in southern Utah have a 14% unemployment rate. To the north, on the northern Great Plains, are the reservations of the former horse-culture tribes.

On the Lakota (Sioux) reservations of the Rosebud and Pine Ridge, the unemployment rates stand at 45% and 46% respectively. Further west, on the Cheyenne River Reservation, the Cheyenne have an unemployment rate of 77%.<sup>22</sup> The differences in unemployment rates among Native Americans can be traced to the economic circumstances of the reservation itself, as well as the surrounding areas. The Cochiti and the other Pueblos along the Rio Grande River in New Mexico are within an economic area marked by growth. The northern Great Plains offer very little in the way of economic possibilities to those who live there, especially on the reservations.

Employment and employability are directly related to educational level. The more education one has, or at least the more focused an education one has, the better chance of gaining good-paying work. In the United States, education is free until the twelfth grade—the end of high school. If one chooses to go beyond the high school level, either to a vocational technical college or a university,



then education at this level must be paid for by the student. The long-term benefits of higher education, however, outweigh the short-term disadvantages of having to pay for that education. Those who quit school before finishing high school are relegated to low-paying, unskilled jobs. Those who finish high school have a better chance of gaining better-paid employment, but those who go beyond high school are better equipped for the job market. The job market seeks skilled, educated workers and the more skills one has, the better off one is. Of Americans in general, slightly more than 77% had finished high school and 21.3% had attended the university to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1990.<sup>23</sup> Native Americans lag behind the general population educationally. Only slightly more than 65% have finished high school and less than 10% have gone beyond high school to earn a Bachelors degree.<sup>24</sup> This lack of education means that 35% of Native Americans, are employable for only low-paying, unskilled jobs, increasing the likelihood that a greater percentage of Native Americans live in poverty than Americans of all races.

This poverty is reflected in Native American health statistics. The leading causes of death among Native Americans, regardless of sex, are heart disease and cancer, the same as for the population as a whole. But among Native American men, accidents rank with heart disease as the two major causes of death. Indeed, accident-related deaths among Native Americans are 212% greater than among the general American population. Many other causes of death among Native Americans have much higher rates than within the general population. Alcoholism is 579% greater, tuberculosis (once thought to be almost eradicated) is 475% greater, suicide is 70% greater, respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia and influenza are 61% greater and homicide is 41% greater than Americans as a whole. The infant mortality rate is also 30% higher than in the general population. Among Native Americans it is 10.9 and among the general population it is 8.4.<sup>25</sup> These causes of death are frequently associated with poverty.

The statistics gathered by the United States government and summarized here reflect a Native American population that is younger and growing

at a faster rate than the general U.S. population as a whole. However, the same statistics also point to the poverty, education and health problems among Native Americans. In this sense, some of the stereotypes of Native Americans are indeed true. Indians, in general, are more likely to live in poverty than other racial groups in the United States. They are less educated than other Americans. They are also more likely to die of poverty-related diseases or other causes than the majority of Americans. These statistics, however, also reflect two hundred years of governmental confusion about what to do with Native Americans; how the tribes should be treated, how much invested should be put into the reservations, or indeed if the reservations should be kept at all.

It is not the purpose of the present issue of the *American Studies Journal* to attempt to offer solutions to the many problems of Native Americans at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is, though, the purpose of this issue to examine some of these problems within the historical context. To solve a problem, one must first acknowledge that the problem exists. The statistics summarized here show that problems exist. The next step is to come to an understanding of the origins of the problem.

But statistics can only tell one so much about Native Americans. The statistics do not answer some questions, though they can help illuminate others. In the following section, we will take a look at some of the more ethereal questions that many have about Indians—who they are and how do they live. These are not simple questions to answer, however.

One question that often comes to mind, at least in the United States in the present day, is what to call Native Americans. Throughout this paper, I have used both Native American and Indian interchangeably. "Indian," as every grade school student has been taught, is really a misnomer, given to the peoples of the western hemisphere by an Italian explorer in the employ of the Spanish Crown. Columbus, so the story goes, thought he had landed in India when he actually landed on a Caribbean Island. His mistake in geography persuaded him that the people he encountered were indeed "Indians" from the sub-continent.

The name stuck. In these days of political correctness in the U.S., the term "Indian" is seen by some as a derogatory term given by a conquering people. In the meso-American country of Guatemala, the Mayan peoples are called "Indigenas" or Indigenous rather than Indians or "Indios" which is an insulting term. Over the years, the native peoples of the western hemisphere have been called Indians, Native Americans, American Indians, Amerindians, and other general, but none-too-satisfactory terms. Indian, and the other general terms, are artificial constructs to group disparate peoples. Only recently have Native Americans begun to think of themselves as more than simply members of their own specific tribes. Indian or Native American, as general terms, have much in common with the terms European, African or Asian. Peoples of those continents think of themselves as members of a greater union, but only in a general way. A German would think of himself as German first, European second. So it is with Native Americans, as well. The tribe comes first in thoughts of self-identification. I asked a graduate school colleague once how she thought of herself, as Indian or Crow. She replied that she was first and foremost Crow, but that Indian worked as a more general idea. A recent debate on the H-Amindian discussion list also highlights this debate. Most list members saw the need for a general term to denote the aboriginal peoples of the Americas, but reiterated that, when speaking about a specific group or to a member of a specific group, the name of that group should be used.<sup>26</sup> In other words, just as one would say that someone is French rather than European, so one would say Arapaho rather than Indian.

This debate on what to call "Indians" leads to a second question, which is, "who is Indian?" As with the term itself, it depends on who one talks to. The same is perhaps true of other groups that think of themselves, or who others think of, as a "people." Anthropologists themselves debate what constitutes belonging to a specific ethnic group.<sup>27</sup> One possibility is self-identity. If someone thinks of themselves as belonging to a given group, then that person is of that group. If someone thinks of themselves as Indian or German, then that person is of that group. However, others of that group might not see self-

identified persons in the same light. A person who simply says that they are Cherokee, might not be seen as such by another Cherokee. The Cherokee, in particular, make a good example because of their history and of the current requirements to be admitted as a member of the tribe. Currently, the membership regulations to become a Cherokee are stringent. An applicant must apply for a "Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood" (CDIB) from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In order to obtain the CDIB, one must have had an ancestor who appeared on the land rolls during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, during the Dawes Act, land-allotment period.<sup>28</sup> It has not always been so hard to become a Cherokee. The Cherokee, like many other eastern tribes, adopted members into their group from other tribes whose membership was dwindling and could not survive as a coherent unit or were seeking refuge or protection from other groups. Such is the case with many run-away slaves, who ended up joining the Cherokee and later become full-fledged members of the tribe. Europeans also married into the Cherokee. Traders often found that their business could be enhanced if they had an Indian wife and so become part of the community rather than be seen as an outsider. The person who joined the tribe became part of the community and was perceived by other members as being of that tribe.<sup>29</sup>

But if it is the case that an outsider could gain the status of full-fledged member of the tribe, then becoming "Indian" had far less to do with ancestry than with something else entirely. This something else is that nebulous construct known as culture. Whereas a society is a group of people living together in a village, town, county or country, "culture" is that collection of common traits that bind the people together. According to James Axtell, culture consists of

an idealized pattern of meanings, values, and ideas differentially shared by the members of a society, which can be inferred from the non-instinctive behavior of the group and from the products of their actions, including material artifacts, language, and social institutions.<sup>30</sup>

These traits include, but are not limited to religion, language, government, lifestyle. However, a

society may have members who are not of the same religions and can still be said to belong to the same culture as other members of the society. So, an outsider might become acculturated, that is, adopt the culture of the tribe, at least in part. In the present-day, those who grew up in or maintain the culture of a tribe could be considered as a member of the tribe. Again, this is a very nebulous concept and the question that could now be raised is how much of the culture must one have before one could be considered as a member of that culture. Cultures themselves are not static entities. They change over time and oftentimes change rather quickly depending on circumstance or environment.

Another possible interpretation of membership in a group is through heredity. If a person can demonstrate that he has ancestors who belonged to the group, then he himself is part of that group. In the United States among Native Americans, this method of determining tribal membership was called "Blood Quantum." The percentage of "blood" a person had determined whether or not the person was a member of the tribe. Again, as with self-identity, this method varied from tribe to tribe. Some groups, such as the Cherokee, hung tribal membership on 1/64th blood. That is, if a person's great, great-grandparent was Cherokee, then that person could be Cherokee as well. Other tribes were more stringent, asking for 1/16—great-grandparents—or 1/4 blood—grandparents. This method of determining group membership has passed by the wayside in the United States.<sup>31</sup>

Returning again to culture, and statistics, language has often been a determining factor in ethnic categorization. Yet in the United States, the number of Native Americans who speak their ancestral tongue is dwindling rapidly. Approximately 281,990 speak an Indian language at home. Of those, almost 158,000 speak an Athapaskan language such as Navajo or Apache.<sup>32</sup> Since the population of Native Americans in the United States is close to two million, only slightly more than ten percent of Native Americans speak their traditional language. If one tried to determine ethnicity based on mother tongue, then there would be few Indians in the United States today.

Getting back to the basics, and to the introduction to this paper, we should take a look at how Native Americans live today. The quick answer would be, just like everyone else. This answer, though, would also be untrue. It is true that many Native Americans, especially those who live off the reservations and in urban areas, do live very much like their non-Indian neighbors. It would, however, be very hard to generalize about how Native Americans live, just as it would be very hard to generalize about how any American ethnic group lives. How one lives is conditional on where one lives, whether one lives in a rural or urban environment, and how much money one has. Nevertheless, there are some general comments one could make about living as a Native American in the present day.

To make these general comments, one might want to compare how various tribes lived traditionally and how they live today. As stated in the introduction of the paper, very few tribes lived in tepees at some point in their history. Those who did were the tribes of the Great Plains and they only adopted the tepee after the coming of the horse, which allowed them more mobility and the ability to follow the buffalo. Housing styles differed from tribe to tribe and from area to area. Among the Iroquois, for example, the common housing form was the long house, constructed with wooden poles that were bent into an upside-down U-shape and then covered with mats of woven grass or bark. There exist some long houses of this style today, but they serve ceremonial rather than living purposes.<sup>33</sup> The Lakota or Sioux, who most people see as the "stereotypical Indian," lived in tepees up through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, even on the reservation, tepees have given way to modern housing, though one sees tepees fairly often, again as ceremonial or short-term housing. Mobile homes are a common sight on the reservations. 14% of the households on reservations are in mobile homes compared to seven percent nationally. Indians on reservations are less likely, however, to live in apartments than Indians off the reservations or the general American population. Only five percent of reservation Indians live in apartments, while 28% of Indians living off the reservation and 27% of all Americans live in apartments.<sup>34</sup> One of the few groups of tribes who live as their ancestors did are the

Pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona. The Pueblos, so called by the Spanish because they lived in permanent communities, constructed houses of stone which were then plastered and often rose to five stories in height. These houses were joined together in rows so that the effect is reminiscent of a modern condominium complex. A journey to the Southwest of the United States today would reveal that these towns still exist and are still occupied by their traditional residents. Some alterations, such as glass windows, have been made but many other aspects of traditional living have remained. Acoma Pueblo still has no running water, no electricity and no sewage system. Over a thousand people still live daily in the town, though many have left the mesa-top community to live in outlying villages where running water, plumbing and electricity do exist.<sup>35</sup> While the people of Acoma themselves chose to keep modern conveniences out of their town, in other areas poverty dictates who has these conveniences and who does not. Plumbing, electricity and so forth are often taken for granted by Europeans and Americans, though many people, regardless of ethnic group, exist in the United States who still live without them. Indians on the reservation are just as likely to live plumbing as the general population of the United States fifty years ago.<sup>36</sup> This phenomenon is not a product of being Indian, but rather a product of poverty.

What all of this information, the statistics and historical information, shows is that the only way to generalize about Native Americans is to create an artificial group, call them Native Americans, and then examine the entire group rather than each distinct ethnic group within the broad racial category. The statistics do show that Native Americans are generally poorer than the majority of Americans. The health statistics bring this poverty to the forefront. What the statistics cannot show, however, is why these statistics are what they are. They cannot show why alcohol consumption is a major cause of death among Native Americans. They cannot illustrate why Native Americans are poorer than other Americans. What is equally important, from the standpoint of a teacher or student interested in Native American history, religion, culture, or literature, is that the statistics cannot demonstrate

the variety of these aspects of Native America. The following articles in this issue of the *American Studies Journal* may help to do that and may give teachers, especially, insight into how to teach about Native American history and cultures.

## Notes

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4. *Federal Register*/Vol. 65, No. 49/Monday, March 13, 2000/Notices, 13298.
5. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, "SUMMARY STATUS of ACKNOWLEDGMENT CASES (as of April 4, 2000)," <<http://www.doi.gov/bia/bar/indexq.htm>>.
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7. Alfred W. Crosby, *Germs, Seeds and Animals: Studies in Ecological History* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 22-23.
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9. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, P25-1130; and *Population Paper Listing* 57., 20.
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13. Department of the Interior, "Lands Under Jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as of December 31, 1997, Acreage Recapitulation by Area Office," <<http://www.doi.gov/bia/realty/area97.html>>.
14. Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1980), 304 - 329.
15. U.S. Bureau of the Census, "1990 Census of Population, General Characteristics, of American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut Persons and Households," 13.
16. More information about the relocation can be found in Donald Fixico, "The Relocation Program and Urbanization," in *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 134-157.
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20. U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Current Population Reports, No. 70. Households, Families, Subfamilies, and Married Couples," <<http://www.census.gov/statab/freq/99s0070.txt>>.
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22. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Local Estimates of Resident Indian Population and Labor Force Status Male/Female Indians Living on and Adjacent to Reservations, Summary by Reservation," <<http://www.doi.gov/bia/ifcons95.html>>.
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24. U.S. Bureau of the Census, "1990 Census of Population, Characteristics of American Indians by Tribe and Language," 1990 CP-3-7. Social and Economic Characteristics of the American Indian Population: 1990.

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26. H-Amindian Discussion List, August and September, 2000, <<http://www.asu.edu/clas/history/h-amindian/>>

27. John Elliot's "Introduction: Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World," in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Agden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 3-14, has some interesting thoughts on ethnicity and identity.

28. Information on Registration with Cherokee Nation, <<http://www.cherokee.org/Services/Registration.htm>>

29. A discussion of the Cherokee adoption practices can be found in William McLoughlin, "Cherokee Anomie, 1794-1810: New Roles for Red Men, Red Women, and Black Slaves," in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*, ed. Mancall and Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), 452-476.

30. James Axtell, "The Ethnohistory of Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 35 (January 1978): 114.

31. See, again, H-Amindian Discussion List, August and September 2000, <<http://www.asu.edu/clas/history/h-amindian/>>.

32. "Characteristics of American Indians by Tribe and Language" (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1994).

33. Elizabeth Tooker, "Iroquois Since 1820," 545-

34. "Housing of American Indians on Reservations—Structural Characteristics," Bureau of the Census, Statistical Brief, 2.

35. See author's PhD dissertation, John Kelly Robison, "Phoenix on the Mesa: A History of Ácoma Pueblo during the Spanish Colonial Period, 1500-1821," Oklahoma State University, 1997.

36. "Housing of American Indians on Reservations—Plumbing," Bureau of the Census, Statistical Brief, 1.

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## ERRATA

In issue 45, notes 10 and 11 of John David Smith's article "The Construction of Ulrich Bonner Phillip's Interpretation of Slavery" were left missing in part or in whole. We apologize for this error. The notes should have read:

10. Stephenson, *The South Lives in History: Southern Historians and Their Legacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 75.

11. See John David Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865-1918* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), chapter 8.

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## Our Cover

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Charles Bird King (1785-1862)  
*Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri and  
Pawnees*  
oil on canvas, 1821  
National Museum of American Art  
Smithsonian Institution

# God Was Better Pleased with the Indians

Malcolm B. Brown

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## The Shawnee Sachem Kakowatcheky and Moravian Missionary Efforts in the Susquehanna Valley

Moravian missionary efforts in the eighteenth century among Northeastern Woodland Indians met with varying degrees of success. The Delaware or Lenape Indians were the most amenable to Moravian missionary efforts, a solid minority of that nation being the subject of decades of efforts by David Zeisberger, John Heckewelder, and others. The Iroquois were intensely proselyted by the Moravians in the late 1740s and early 1750s, and only the inception of the French and Indian War stifled Christianization efforts with this group.<sup>1</sup> The Shawnees, however, were much more problematic to the hard-working and relatively open-minded Moravians. This paper<sup>2</sup> will explore the effect of Moravian proselyting efforts in 1742 on the Pechoquelin band of Shawnees, then living at the village of Wyomink on the Susquehanna River.

Moravian missionaries first came into the Susquehanna Valley under the direction of Nicolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf in the summer of 1742. The old Moravian Church, the *Unitas Fratrum* or United Brethren, had broken with the Catholic Church in 1467, and its members were forced into hiding in Moravia. In 1722, the religiously open-minded Count Zinzendorf had given these *Moravians* shelter at his estate at Herrnhut, Saxony. The majority of this group of *Herrnhutters*, under the leadership of Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, first moved to Georgia in 1734-1735 to escape further persecution in Europe. In 1740, with war imminent between Britain and Spain, the Moravians moved to the more secure environment of Pennsylvania. In general highly-educated, undogmatic, and non-fanatical, the Moravians preached peace and unity among the sects then blindly bumping against each other in

the German-American variant of the Great Awakening.<sup>3</sup>

Zinzendorf, exiled from his German estates by his reactionary feudal overlords, came to America in December 1741 to help build up the Moravian Church in Pennsylvania and to act on Spangenberg's suggestion for a mission to the Indians. In many ways, the count was the perfect man for the job. He was a well-educated, thoughtful, sincere, decent man who had a great vision of his mission. Generous to a fault (and thus greatly loved by children), he was willing to endure great privations and travel great distances to present his message. A very effective speaker, Zinzendorf was a commanding personality in every room he entered. But in some ways he fell short of what was needed for an effective missionary to the Indians. He was proud, stubborn, authoritative, and demanding. He had little tact or patience for diplomacy, an absolute requirement for those who wished to exert influence with the astute and diplomatically-proper Northeastern Woodlands Indians. In summary, he was a very intense man, impatient with those who disagreed with him. None of his negative traits endeared him to his usually patient and tolerant Indian hosts and traveling companions. But his good traits usually outweighed the bad. Called a "Religious Don Quixote" by Provincial Secretary James Logan, he was one of the best and most revered men who ever set foot in colonial Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

Acting from Moravian headquarters at the town of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in early August 1742, Count Zinzendorf felt a strong urge to go to the home of Conrad Weiser, colonial Pennsylvania's senior Indian interpreter and diplomat. Weiser was a German immigrant farmer from the

Palatinate who had been adopted by the Mohawks while living in New York in the early 1700s. Moving to Pennsylvania in 1729 and fluent in the difficult Mohawk language, by 1732 he had become colonial Pennsylvania's ambassador to the Iroquois Confederacy and other Indian nations, largely because he had the total trust of the still-powerful Iroquois Great Council. At Weiser's small plantation near Tulpehocken Creek in Lancaster County, Zinzendorf found three important sachems of the Iroquois Confederacy resting after attending a conference in Philadelphia. His warm reception by these Indian leaders—the Onondaga Great Council sachems Canasatego and Coxhayion, and Shikellamy, the chief Iroquois overseer and mediator in the Susquehanna Valley—was the beginning of many years of friendly relations between the Moravians and the Iroquois.<sup>5</sup>

With some misgivings, the woods-wise Weiser agreed to guide the Count and his party of missionaries on their planned journey to the Indians along the Susquehanna River. Zinzendorf's party at one time or another included Peter Böhler, Heinrich Leimbach, and the honeymooning Martin Mack and his bride Jeanette. It also included David Nitschmann and his sister, the fearless Anna Nitschmann, who would later become Zinzendorf's second wife. In early September 1742 they journeyed from Weiser's home to the important Indian village trading center of Shamokin<sup>6</sup>, at the conflux of the forks of the Susquehanna River. There Shikellamy, their host, met them and made them feel welcome.

Shikellamy was an important man to know, as his word was law in the Susquehanna Valley due to his position of Iroquois overseer of all Indian groups in the area. More of a mediator than an imperial dictator, Shikellamy had no war parties to call on to enforce his decisions or the pronouncements of the Iroquois Great Council, but only his own intelligence, statesmanship, and extraordinary abilities at persuasion. With the aid of his friend Conrad Weiser, he was a critical element in the development of colonial Pennsylvania and English North America. Called "Swatane" by the Iroquois and "Shikellamy" by the Lenapes and colonials, Shikellamy was originally the son of French parents, born in

Montreal and taken captive by an Oneida war party while in his youth. Reared by that nation, he later attained the offices of sachem and councilor. A superb diplomat, he was of vast interest to Count Zinzendorf, who somewhat erroneously called him "an Oneida Viceroy." As Shikellamy's approval was needed for further missionary efforts in the Susquehanna Valley, Zinzendorf interpreted the fact that the far-traveling sachem happened to be at Shamokin when the count and his party arrived "as a special divine token." Apparently Zinzendorf's religious conversations with Shikellamy at Shamokin eventually had the desired effect, as the Oneida sachem accepted the Moravian variant of Christianity just prior to his death in 1748.<sup>7</sup>

After a few days of rest, the count and his party, guided by Weiser, journeyed up West branch of the Susquehanna to Otstonwakin, where the Iroquois village sachem Madam Montour and her resourceful son Andrew also hosted the count and his fellow travelers. "Madam Montour," as she was known to the traders in the region, was a Seneca sachem, village headwoman, interpreter, and pro-British diplomat. Born in Canada sometime in the 1680s to Abenaki-French parents, she was captured about age ten by a Seneca war party. Adopted and raised by that nation, her superb diplomatic skills and extraordinary command of languages (French, English, and many Iroquoian and Algonkian languages), insured that she would become very influential in Iroquois diplomatic affairs. With her husband, Carondawanna, an important Oneida war leader, and her children, she relocated from the Iroquois homeland to Otstonwakin sometime prior to 1728, apparently to help Shikellamy watch over the Shawnees and other Indians in the Susquehanna Valley. There she quickly became important in the diplomatic activities of the region. After the death of her husband in battle while attacking the Catawbas in 1729, she continued alone for many years thereafter as the leader of her village. Zinzendorf "displeased" Madam Montour when he refused to baptize two small children of her village. The Moravians did not believe in baptizing new members until they were adults, in direct contrast to the practices of the Jesuits, of which Madam Montour was apparently familiar. It is probable that the children

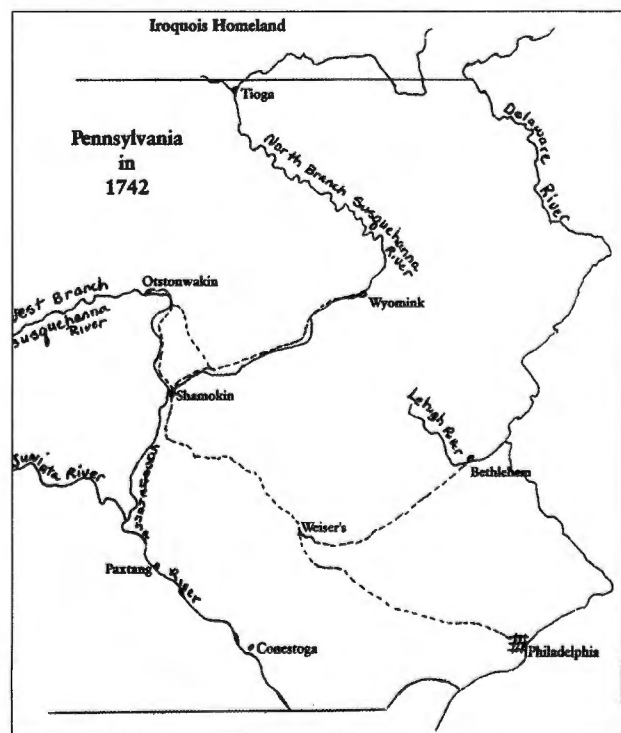
were members of Madam Montour's extended family or clan, as her actions were characteristic of what an Iroquois clan matron would do for such young kinsmen. She must not have remained "displeased" with the Moravians for long, however, as she later allowed her village to become a rendezvous-point and base of operations for Moravian missionaries in the northern Susquehanna Valley.<sup>8</sup>

Zinzendorf had determined before he arrived at Otstonwakin to attempt to convert the Shawnees at the village of Wyomink on the North Branch of the Susquehanna River.<sup>9</sup> This trading center was located on the north bank of the Susquehanna River just below the present-day town of Plymouth, a western suburb of the present-day city of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Under pressure from colonials and the Iroquois, a band of Shawnees from the Pechoquelin towns on the Delaware River had constructed the village in 1728, and were later joined by Shawnees from other bands. Although the majority of its inhabitants were Shawnees, the town also included some Mahicans and Delawares, and had a Nanticoke village in its suburbs. Wyomink's village sachem, Kakowatcheky (Cachawatkecha, or Cohevwickick), had also been the head sachem at the Pechoquelin towns on both sides of the Delaware River above the Delaware Water Gap from sometime before 1709 through 1728. A perceptive and astute observer of people, he was one of the wisest and most revered of the sachems of the era, and was more aware of the consequences of Euroamerican-Indian contact than almost anyone else at the time.<sup>10</sup>

Had he been more open-minded about Shawnee theology and respectful of their culture, Zinzendorf might have had more success at Wyomink than he did. Among the Shawnees in the colonial era, the Supreme Being (Muyetelemilakwau, or Muyaataalemeelarkwau, "The Finisher") was identified as a male spirit who superintended the moral affairs of mankind. The Creator was served by two subordinate deities, "Waupoathee" and "Skeelauwaatheethar," an old Grandmother and her grandson, who oversaw the affairs of the Indians, and an unnamed deity who watched over the whites. The Shawnee also had conceptions of a single evil

spirit (malevolent, but of lesser power than the Creator), and also some conceptions of eternal rewards and/or punishments, but these ideas may have been implanted by Christian missionaries or by diffusion from white Euro-American cultures. Thus Moravian Christianity, with its emphasis on the ancient "Love Feast" of the Apostles, church music, relative tolerance, and missionary work, was not entirely antithetical to the Shawnee or other Eastern Woodlands Indian cultures of the day, all of whom were relatively tolerant of different religious views.<sup>11</sup>

In early October, the count's party, with the addition of young Andrew Montour,<sup>12</sup> fluent in the Shawnee language and on his first diplomatic mission, traveled eastward from Otstonwakin to Wyomink to work among the Shawnees.<sup>13</sup> Weiser, who had business to take care of back home, left the party for a few days with a promise to meet them at Wyomink. It soon became apparent that Zinzendorf's methods were at cross-purposes with his desired religious ends. The count, who had wanted quiet to be able to read his books, had blundered badly and angered members of Kakowatcheky's band when he pitched his tent about a mile away from their homes near an old silver mine and on top of an Indian burial ground. Arriving a few days later, Weiser had great





difficulty controlling a man who was both obstreperous and extremely generous. Zinzendorf, unable to get the Indians to even listen to him, had given them all of his buttons and shoe buckles in a misguided effort to please them. Kakowatcheky had been very kind, patient, and considerate to Zinzendorf during the latter's stay at Wyomink. The Indians generally thought that Zinzendorf was conjuring spirits in his tent to show him the location of the silver mine. Thus many Shawnees wanted to kill this "sorcerer," and Kakowatcheky was compelled to use all his diplomatic skill and authority to keep the count and his party safe.<sup>14</sup>

Kakowatcheky, then at least seventy years old and apparently a bit tired of the whole affair, came to the Count's tent to explain to him why his people would not listen. This important speech, translated from Shawnee to Mohawk by Andrew Montour, and from Mohawk to German by Conrad Weiser, was paraphrased in an account that Weiser wrote to a friend about five years later:

This I do remember, that the old chief said: He believed in God, who created the Indians as well as the Europeans, only there was this Difference, that the former were created Brown the latter White, the latter prayed with Words, the former in their Hearts, which God saw and was very kind to the Indians. He himself was an Indian of God's creation and he was satisfied with his condition and had no wish to be a European, above all he was a subject of the Iroquois, it did not behoove him to take up new Things without their Advice or Example. If the Iroquois chose to become Europeans, and learned to pray like them: he would have nothing to say against it, but as a matter of fact there was not much behind the Prayers of Europeans. They were mostly bad People. He liked the Indian Way of Life. God had been very kind to him even in his old Age and would continue to look well after him. God was better pleased with the Indians, than with the Europeans. It was wonderful how much he helped them. He thanked the Count for his good intentions, but firmly declined his proposals though in the most courteous manner.<sup>15</sup>

Although one of the most tolerant of the eighteenth-century European nobility, Zinzendorf's imperious ways and failure to learn from those he was trying to convert had been one of the principal causes of his mission's failure among the Shawnees. Realizing that it would do little good to stay among the glowering Indians, the count quickly left Wyomink with his party. Although furious with the Shawnees, he could do little about it but misidentify Kakowatcheky in later writings as "the Dragon," or the Judeo-Christian Satan.<sup>16</sup>

The Moravians fared much better among the Iroquois and Lenapes, yet even among these groups there was a marked continuance of independent thinking about religious matters. In addition, any acceptance was usually tempered with a large amount of religious syncretism. Many Native Americans in the colonial era saw Christianity as providing some continuance or enhancement of their own religion rather than as a complete break with their traditional religious beliefs. Madam Montour's flirtation with the Catholic traditions she had learned in her youth are well known. She had adapted and combined what she regarded as the best aspects of both Christianity and Iroquoian religions, and was somewhat perturbed when Count Zinzendorf did not also adhere to her conceptions of what Christian missionaries should believe and do.<sup>17</sup>

One of the best examples of religious syncretism can be found in the case of the death and burial of Shikellamy. While visiting the Moravians at Bethlehem in the autumn of 1748, he had at least nominally converted to Christianity. Traveling home to Shamokin with Moravian missionary David Zeisberger, the old sachem became ill near Tulpehocken Creek (present-day Berks County, Pennsylvania). Arriving at his house in Shamokin, he stretched himself out on his mat, too ill to move. The next day Shikellamy's daughter came to Zeisberger, saying that he should come quickly, as her father was "going home." When Zeisberger came to his bedside, Shikellamy could no longer speak, but smiled at him, and then, in the presence of his daughter, grandchildren, and Zeisberger, quietly died. His sons, all out hunting, were sent for, and Zeisberger and gunsmith Henry Fry made him a coffin. Shikellamy's body was painted, his coffin

ornamented, and his weapons and other things he might need in the afterlife (musket, tomahawk, knife, arrows, wampum, clothing, blankets, bread, pipe and tobacco, flint and tinder, fishing line and hooks, needle, and some English coins) were placed in the coffin with him, according to Iroquois custom. With the entire village attending, Christian burial services were conducted three days after his death, and Shikellamy was interred in the Indian burial ground at Shamokin. In view of the fact that Shikellamy was the only member of his family to convert to Christianity, it is extremely likely that traditional Iroquois condolence ceremonies were quietly performed for him at Shamokin, hidden from the watchful eyes of the Moravians.<sup>18</sup>

Although Zinzendorf himself was in large-part responsible for the failure of the Shawnee

mission, Kakowatcheky and his Shawnees had by-and-large rejected Christianity because their own traditional religion served them better. Kakowatcheky was a very tolerant individual who had amassed a great deal of experience interacting with Euroamericans. Yet the Shawnee sachem apparently saw Christianity, even the relatively tolerant Moravian version, as a malevolent construct used by Europeans (such as Count Zinzendorf) to force their beliefs on others. Tolerant of other Indians who were more amenable to Christian beliefs, such as Shikellamy and Madam Montour, Kakowatcheky was essentially unconvinced that the Moravians had anything of value to offer his people. He rejected their proselyting with the interesting argument that God, who had admittedly created both Indians and Christian missionaries, was better pleased with the Shawnee people because they



Nicolaus Ludwig Graf Zinzendorf mit Konrad Weiser und den Häuptlingen von 5 Indianernationen

Nicolaus Ludwig Count Zinsendorf with Konrad Weiser and the chiefs of five Indian nations.

Oil on canvas, copy by Anna Arndt after J.V. Haidt

Reprinted by permission of the Moravian Archives, Herrnhut

remained true to themselves by not accepting Christianity.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to Bethlehem on 9 November, a somewhat subdued Zinzendorf continued his New World missionary efforts, although primarily among German-Americans in the Philadelphia area. He did not, however, forget the Indians who had befriended him, nominating other Moravian Church leaders to oversee the Indian missions just prior to his return to Europe in early 1743. Continuing his religious activities in Europe, Zinzendorf died at Herrnhut in the spring of 1760, thirteen days prior to the death of his second wife and Indian missionary companion, Anna Nitschmann.<sup>20</sup> That same year, under pressure from Euroamericans, and perhaps due in part to the difficulties with Zinzendorf, the Pechoquelin Shawnee band removed from Wyomink westward to the trading center of Logstown on the Ohio River. There Kakowatcheky was extremely influential in the counsels of the Ohio Indians despite being blind and unable to stand without assistance. He died sometime after 1755, a revered figure among the Shawnee people and the other Indian nations then residing in the area.<sup>21</sup> Kakowatcheky's stalwart yet courteous defense of Native American religious traditions in the face of the onslaught of European beliefs then being hurled at Northeastern Woodlands Indians is a refreshing glimpse into the lives and thoughts of a people both peripheral to colonial society and yet also a fervent focus of Moravian missionary efforts.

### Notes

1. Earl P. Olmstead, *Blackcoats Among the Delaware: David Zeisberger on the Ohio Frontier* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), 5-8. Glimpses into the work of the Moravians among the Lenapes can be found in the writings of David Zeisberger, particularly his *History of Northern American Indians* (1779), which can be found in its entirety in the *Ohio State Archeological and Historical Quarterly* 19 (1910): 1-189. George Henry Loskiel's *Geschichte der Mission der Evangelischen Breuder Unter der Indianern in Nordamerika* (1789), John Heckewelder's *Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, From its Commencement, in the Year 1740, to the Close in the Year 1808* (1820), and Edmund Alexander De Schweinitz's *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger, The Western Pioneer and Apostle of the Indians* (1870) also offer excellent analyses of eighteenth century Moravian endeavors with the Lenape.

2. An early draft of this paper was presented before the Annual Conference of the Oklahoma Association of Professional Historians on 22 February 1997. The author wishes to thank his mentor and friend Dr. L.G. Moses of Oklahoma State University for his advice and encouragement.

3. Nicholas Ludwig, Graf von Zinzendorf, Zinzendorf's Narrative, in *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, ed. William C.

Reichel, hereafter cited as *Memorials* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1870), 84-99; J. Martin Mack's Recollections, in *Memorials*, 100-111; Conrad Weiser to Peter Brunnholtz, 16 Feb 1747, in Archives, Juniata College Library, hereafter cited as JCL; Dietmar Rothermund, *The Layman's Progress: Religious and Political Experience in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1740-1770* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), 19-21; Harvey Wish, *Society and Thought in Early America: A Social and Intellectual History of the American People Through 1865* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1962), 152-153.

4. Rothermund, *Layman's Progress*, 26-31; John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 176-177. Conrad Weiser's biographer Paul A.W. Wallace described Zinzendorf as "a kind of Christian Mastodon, trampling ruthlessly over all obstacles that stood between him and the Lamb of God." Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 136-137.

5. Minutes of the Provincial Council, 1 Sep 1728, in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 16 vols., hereafter cited as PCR (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J. Severns and Company, 1838-1853), 3:330-331; Zinzendorf's Narrative, *Memorials*, 67-68; Conrad Weiser, *The Autobiography of John Conrad Weiser as contained in Johan Frederick Weisers Buch*, ed. Frederick S. Weiser (Hanover, Pennsylvania: The John Conrad Weiser Family Association, 1976), 3, 15. Although he was Pennsylvania's senior Indian diplomat, Weiser was considered to be "half theirs" and thus greatly trusted by the Iroquois Great Council in negotiations with colonial governments due to his Mohawk adoption and well-known honesty. He was a major voice in colonial-Indian relations until his death in 1760. Report from Shikellamy, Minutes of the Provincial Council, 10 December 1731, in PCR, 3:425.

6. This is present-day Sunbury and Northumberland, Pennsylvania. The location of an extensive Susquehannock village at the time of first contact, Delaware and Shawnee expatriates from Paxtang (Harrisburg, PA) and the Delaware Valley resettled the site about 1718. It was the largest and most heavily-populated Indian village complex on the Susquehanna from 1727 to 1756, the most important town south of Tioga Point because it was located at the junction of two important military and diplomatic trails, the Great Warriors Path and the Great Shamokin Path. In 1745, Presbyterian Missionary David Brainerd noted that the town actually sprawled northwestward from what is now Sunbury onto present-day Packer's Island and the southern part of present-day Northumberland. It then contained over fifty homes and about three hundred inhabitants, of whom about half were Delaware, and the remainder Iroquois (mostly Senecas, with a few Tuscaroras), Mahicans, Conoys, and Tutelos. A blacksmith shop was constructed there by the Moravians in 1747, and soon became the goal of Indians who often came great distances to get their flintlock guns repaired. The Lenape term "Shamokin" is a variant of "Shackamaxon," which refers to the residence of the foremost Lenape sachem on the Delaware River. The Iroquois called the rocky hill across the river "Otzinachon," or "The Demon's Den," where the Indians said that evil spirits congregated and held their revels. Zinzendorf, *Memorials*, 66-67, 94; Minutes of the August 1728 Philadelphia Conference with the Indians of the Susquehanna, in PCR, 3:326; David Brainerd's *Journal*, as quoted in Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail, or the Ventures and Adventures of Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path*, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1911; reprint, Lewisburg, PA: Wennawoods Publishing, 1995), 1:195-196; George P. Donehoo, *Indian Villages and Place Names in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: The Telegraph Press, 1928; reprint, Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, Inc., 1995), 187.

7. Quotations from Zinzendorf's Narrative, *Memorials*, 67, 86-90; John Bartram, *Observations* (1743), as quoted in Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, 197; Names of the Indians Present at the 1742 Philadelphia Conference, in PCR, 4:584; Edmund Alexander De Schweinitz, *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger, The Western Pioneer and Apostle of the Indians* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott

and Company, 1870; reprint. New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1971), 149. Shikellamy had extraordinary influence among the Indians he watched over. He stilled a rather loud Indian celebration at Shamokin so that his guests, Count Zinzendorf and other Moravian missionaries, could have quiet in which to pray. It is perhaps due to the misunderstanding of such seemingly-continual drumming, to the present day a major component of Native American ceremonialism, that Zinzendorf's missionary companion Martin Mack called Shamokin "the very seat of the Prince of Darkness." Zinzendorf's Narrative, *Memorials*, 67-68, 93.

8. Zinzendorf's Narrative, *Memorials*, 62-99; Martin Mack's Recollections, in *Memorials*, 100; Conference Between Governor Hunter and the Indians, 9 October 1711, in Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols., hereafter cited as NYCD (Albany, New York: Weed, Parsons, and Company, 1855), 5:278-279; Report of Trader James LeTort to the Provincial Council, 18 April 1728, in PCR, 3:295; Presents Delivered to the Indians Following the 1728 Philadelphia Conference, 11 October 1728, in *ibid.*, 337; Philadelphia Treaty Conference with the Iroquois, 1727, in *ibid.*, 271-276; Conrad Weiser, Report of a Journey to Onondaga, 1743, in *ibid.*, 4:640. Isabelle Montour risked her life to give Conrad Weiser and his servant some corn meal from the village stores when they passed through her village on a diplomatic mission during a famine in the terrible winter of 1737. She remained active in her old age, traveling extensively and continuing to be very influential with the New York, Pennsylvania, and Iroquois governments, in addition to her duties as the sachem of her village. She left Otstonwakin to live with her son Andrew and his family in the Allegheny River valley sometime in the late 1740s due to a prolonged famine in the Susquehanna valley. Isabelle had become blind sometime between 1745 and 1752, but was still vigorous enough to ride a horse from Logstown to Venango in 1752 in two days, a distance of about sixty miles. She died in late 1752 or early 1753, one of the most influential and accomplished of the Iroquois female sachems. Conrad Weiser, Narrative of a Journey From Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, to Onondaga, in 1737, in Henry R. Schoolcraft, *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company, 1851), 4:324-341; Witham Marshe, *Journal* (1744), as quoted in Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, 1:200-202; The Examination of Andrew Montour and John Patten, Taken Before the Governor, 12 March 1754, in PCR, 5:762.

9. Wyomink is a corruption of the Iroquoian term "M'cheuomek" or "M'cheuomi," meaning "Great Flats" or "Great Meadow." A Seneca variant is "Schandowana" or "Skehandowana." According to Conrad Weiser, the pronunciation of the town's name in his day was closer to "Wyomink" ("Wajomak" in his Germanicized English) rather than the more familiar Anglicized "Wyoming." Conrad Weiser to Peter Brunnholtz, 16 February 1747, in JCL; Donehoo, *Indian Villages*, 259.

10. Colonel John Stanwix to Governor Denny, 24 October 1757, in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 9 Series, 138 volumes, hereafter cited as PA (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J. Severns and Company, 1852-1949), 1st Series, 3:301; Indian Deed for Land between the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers, 1749, in PA, 1st Series, 2:33-37; Richard Peters to John Hughes, 10 October 1757, in *ibid.*, 3:288; Conrad Weiser's Report of his Journey to Onondaga, June-August 1743, in PCR, 4:667; Conrad Weiser to the Governor, 12 May 1754, in *ibid.*, 6:35; Information Given to Conrad Weiser by John Shikellamy, 26 February 1756, in *ibid.*, 7:52; Council With the Indians at Philadelphia, 26 April 1756, in *ibid.*, 7:108; Conrad Weiser to Peter Brunnholtz, 16 February 1747, in JCL. The town of Wyomink is located on the Survey map of the Manor of Sunbury, in PA, 3rd Series, 4: no. 67. The town site has been partially excavated, and is located just south of Bead Street (whose name is derived from the large number of trade beads found at the site) in present-day Plymouth, Pennsylvania. Barry C. Kent, *Susquehanna's Indians* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1993), 88-91.

11. Conrad Weiser to Peter Brunnholtz, 16 February 1747, in JCL; Zinzendorf's Narrative, in *Memorials*, 96-98; C.C. Trowbridge, "Shawnee Traditions: C.C. Trowbridge's Account," in *Occasional Contributions From the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan*, no. 9 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1939), 40-43; James H. Howard, *Shawnee! The Ceremonialism of a Native American Tribe and Its Cultural Background* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981), 162-182; Wish, *Society and Thought in Early America*, 152-153. C.C. Trowbridge, who, in the 1820s, was the first ethnologist to study Shawnee culture, was himself unsure how much of Shawnee Theology had been colored by transfer from white Christian Anglo culture. Interestingly, the conception of the Supreme Being moved atypically from Patriarchal to Matriarchal identification in Shawnee Theology from 1824, when Trowbridge lived among them, to the 1930s, when Charles and Erminie Voegelin did their ethnological studies among the Shawnees. By this late date, the Creator was identified as a female, "Our Grandmother" (Kokomthena) or "Cloud Woman" (Papoothkwe). Charles Frederick Voegelin, *The Shawnee Female Deity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1936), 1-21; Charles F. and Erminie W. Voegelin, "The Shawnee Female Deity in Historical Perspective," in *American Anthropologist* 46 (July 1944): 370-375; Howard, *Shawnee!*, 164-170.

12. Andrew Montour, also known as Henry Montour, "Oughsara," "Eghisara," or "Sattelihi," was born sometime in the late 1710s or early 1720s. He was the oldest son of Madam Montour and Carondowanna, and later became a prominent diplomat, warrior, trader, and land speculator. He was a very useful person in Indian diplomacy, attending his first formal diplomatic conference in 1743 at Shamokin. Montour was fluent in many languages and highly esteemed by the Indians as an Iroquois sachem and by the English as a very good trader and businessman. A superb statesman when sober, he was, however, a difficult man to get on with when drunk. With George Croghan and other British traders, he fought under George Washington (who had the highest esteem for him) at Fort Necessity in 1754, and under General Edward Braddock at the disastrous Battle of the Monongahela in 1755. Continually loyal to the British cause and his Iroquois kinsmen, Montour's later exploits in the French and Indian War and Pontiac's War as a war leader and spy made him a legend in both colonial and Indian circles. Conrad Weiser, Report of a Journey to Onondaga, 1743, in PCR, 4:640; The Examination of Andrew Montour and John Patten, Allegheny Traders, 12 March 1754, in PCR, 5:762; Nancy L. Hagedorn, "Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent: Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772," chap. in *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 44-60.

13. See J. Martin Mack's Recollections of his journey from Otstonwakin to Wyomink in October 1742, in *Memorials*, 100-111, for a good description of the area in the 1740s.

14. J. Martin Mack's Recollections, in *Memorials*, 102-108.

15. Conrad Weiser to Peter Brunnholtz, 16 February 1747, in JCL.

16. J. Martin Mack's Recollections, in *Memorials*, 108. The Moravians also placed some of the blame on Andrew Montour, whom they accused (probably unjustly) of making misstatements to the Shawnees while interpreting that "had not been fully in our interests." *Ibid.*

17. Zinzendorf's Narrative in *Memorials*, 94; Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, 22 April 1749, in PA, 1st Series, 2:23; J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "Aztec Spirituality and Nahuatized Christianity," in *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality*, ed. Gary H. Gossen and Miguel Leon-Portilla (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993): 175; Daniel K. Richter, "Some of Them ... Would Always Have a Minister With Them': Mohawk Protestantism, 1683-1719," in *American Indian Quarterly* 16 (1992): 480-481.

18. Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, 22 April 1749, in PA, 1st Series, 2:23; Horatio Hale, ed., *The Iroquois Book of Rites*



(Philadelphia: D.G. Brinton, 1883; reprint. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 153; Edmund Alexander De Schweinitz, *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger, The Western Pioneer and Apostle of the Indians* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1870; reprint. New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1971), 149; C. Hale Sipe, *Indian Chiefs of Pennsylvania* (Butler, PA: Ziegler Printing Company, 1927; reprint, Lewisburg, PA: Wennawoods Publishing, 1994), 159, 162.

19. Conrad Weiser to Peter Brunnholtz, 16 February 1747, in *JCL*.

20. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 178-234.

21. Weiser's Journal of Proceedings with the Indians at Ohio, 1748, in *PCR*, 5:348-358; Council with the Indians at Philadelphia, 14 April 1755, in *PCR*, 6:360; Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, 1:154-155.

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George Caitlin (1796-1872)  
*The White Cloud, Head Chief of the Iowas*  
canvas, ca. 1845  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
Paul Mellon Collection

George Caitlin, a self-taught American painter, was famous for his paintings of Native Americans. Since he was not successful in selling his works in the United States, he went to England and France where his paintings were highly praised.

# *Early Cold War and American Indians: Minority under Pressure*

*Jaakko Puisto*

One of the less known aspects of the early cold war (1945-54) were its effects on minority groups in both the United States and the Soviet Union, and, really, in many parts of the world. Other scholars might do well in dealing with minorities of the Soviet Union, Latin America, Africa etc. in the cold war era, but this paper deals with the United States, and specifically with Native Americans. For the United States, the cold war was above all ideological warfare requiring extraordinary patriotism in conformity with the nation's mainstream views. Therefore it is not surprising that Native Americans soon became a target of those who argued that American Indians condoned socialistic practices threatening to the United States in an era of national emergency. On the other hand, as this paper argues, more significant for Native Americans was that the cold war continued the economic boom in the West that had started during World War II. This boom put pressure on the government and Indians to open for development reservation resources, such as oil, uranium, coal and other minerals. Ironically, reservations were originally founded in regions that were considered inhospitable to white settlers. That they nearly one hundred years later proved to contain rich mineral resources was history's quirk. Yet, as a result, those who remained on the short end of the stick were once again American Indians who were about to lose much of their already vastly diminished land base.

This paper will argue that the early cold war had major implications in the United States policy toward American Indians and greatly affected the lives of Native Americans in more ways than one. This paper will first discuss the domestic political atmosphere in the early cold war United States (1945-54) and will then discuss the issues Native Americans faced due to the cold war. After 1954 and the fall of Joseph McCarthy the worst domestic anti-communist and anti-New Deal hysteria subsided. Not accidentally, the most

repressive period against New Deal reforms in Indian policy started to slowly recede at the same time. Tribes themselves had a lot to do with this. The opposition of tribal leaders and American Indian organizations stopped the unwanted policy of termination and contributed to the rise of self-determination demands during the 1960s.

With World War II, the New Deal coalition of liberals and labor, kept skillfully together by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, began to crumble. The war effort necessarily took a lot out of the New Deal reform, which had already slowed down by 1938, and united the nation to battle the enemy. After Roosevelt died in April of 1945, inexperienced Harry S. Truman could not provide similar leadership. The Democratic Party faced the 1946 elections divided, and Republicans gained a majority to the 80th Congress. A number of new senators and congressmen were fiscal conservatives and isolationists wanting to avoid United States' commitments abroad. Conservatives felt that the reform had gone too far and wanted to end the Democrats' dominance of the federal government. A conservative coalition between Republicans and southern Democrats emerged in an effort to stop further reforms, cut federal spending and reduce taxes. They wanted to cut into the role of the federal government, the size of which had been the traditional fear of the American republicanism, but from which the New Deal era provided an exception. Conservatives also wanted a strong stand against the Soviet Union, yet were unwilling to spend money.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the end of the war the Soviet Union and the United States fell into disagreement over the political status of Germany and east central European nations. Indeed, on February 9, 1946, Soviet leader Josef Stalin spoke of the inevitability of future war as long as capitalism existed and encircled the Soviet Union. George Kennan, a State Department diplomat stationed in Moscow,

promptly concluded in his "long telegram" of February 22 that no matter what the United States does, no diminution of hostility would follow. Former British premier Winston Churchill in a Fulton, Missouri, March 5, 1946, speech approved by the White House, spoke of the iron curtain that had fallen between the West and East Europe. The final declaration of the cold war followed in President Truman's address to the Senate on March 12, 1947. In what became known as the Truman Doctrine, the president urged Congress to provide aid to Greece and Turkey because the Soviet-American conflict was a clash between two mutually irreconcilable ideologies. By shocking Congress and the public to support anti-Soviet policies, Truman started a circle of rhetoric and response that continued until détente started 25 years later.<sup>2</sup> The Truman administration's open-door policy argued that economic depression, a precondition for a take-over of socialist governments, could be avoided only if global markets and raw materials were open for all. American self-interest, national economy and national security were inseparably linked. To gain support for the expensive foreign economic and military programs from the unwilling Congress, the Truman administration exaggerated external dangers.<sup>3</sup> The new Secretary of State Dean Acheson argued that communism was a corrupting ideology and a tool of Russian foreign policy. According to him, the Communist Party in practically every country was "an adjunct of Russian foreign policy."<sup>4</sup> Not one member of Congress or the administration questioned the assumption that further communist expansion would threaten American security.<sup>5</sup>

Cold war's ideological fight was good domestic politics as far as economic affairs were concerned. It may have prevented feared post-war economic downturn and secured jobs. The threat of a new recession indeed had been real. However, military spending contributed to an economic boom, especially in the West. But the boom did not benefit every one equally: Minority workers were excluded from labor unions and better jobs, and were the first to be laid off. Discrimination was persistent. Military spending and the pressure to cut taxes and to balance the budget drained resources from productive civilian investments and increased the political power of

conservative areas, especially the West. President Truman's Fair Deal program promised to extend the New Deal reforms and to protect the civil rights, but the cold war effectively defeated all its proposals. By 1948, the United States spent only 1.5% of its annual budget for education while spending 34% for military purposes. Social needs had to be met on a voluntary and local basis.<sup>6</sup>

Unavoidably, the cold war spread into domestic political rhetoric. New Dealers, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, and liberal congressmen moved toward anti-communism to avoid becoming labeled as communist sympathizers themselves. Caution became contagious; being labeled soft on communism would bring vulnerability in elections. In the process, liberal principles of individual rights were compromised. Former vice-president Henry Wallace was particularly accused of being a communist. As a result, Wallace's presidential aspirations as a Progressive Party candidate in the 1948 elections had no chance. Wallace had been the last active New Dealer in the government until his dismissal in 1946.<sup>7</sup> One of these liberal anti-communist congressmen was Hubert Humphrey, a Democrat from Minnesota, whom Lyndon Johnson later chose as his vice-president. Humphrey's special interest were communist unions, particularly in defense industries: "Communists seek to use the unions as systems of power to promote Soviet Russia's foreign policies." He acknowledged that those opposing unions in general made it more difficult to weed out actual communists. In this pursuit, the National Labor Relations Act (Taft-Hartley Act) of 1947 had not helped, even if it required union officers to sign affidavits that they were not members of the Communist Party or its affiliates in order for the union to operate on a workplace. Secretary of Labor Maurice Tobin argued that additional legislation was needed to prevent strikes not based on legitimate grievances but on communist goals to sabotage western industry.<sup>8</sup> Quite obviously, all strikes could be put down as communist-inspired no matter what their cause. Humphrey in 1954 introduced a communist control bill, the passage of which saved the political careers of many liberal congressmen. The act in effect excluded all communists from participating in the political process. All communists could in fact be treated as foreign agents.<sup>9</sup>

The result of these efforts to battle domestic communism eventually was a hysteria exemplified by the crusading Senator Joseph McCarthy's (Republican from Wisconsin) investigations into subversive activities of alleged communist "fellow-travelers" in the State Department. McCarthy was of the conservative "class of '46." He first introduced his allegations in a speech he made in Wheeling, West Virginia on February 9, 1950. He soon introduced Senate Resolution 231 to investigate disloyalty in the State Department. A Foreign Relations Committee appointed a subcommittee chaired by liberal Democrat Millard Tydings of Maryland to conduct the investigation. Tydings was suspicious of the true idea behind the investigation: "This committee is liable to be put in the position where it can be charged with trying to cover up and trying to evade its responsibility."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was election year and the investigation immediately turned into a battle between Tydings and McCarthy and his supporters. McCarthy presented allegations and the subcommittee was supposed to investigate them using subpoenas to get witnesses. The possible evidence was in the State Department documents and despite subpoenas, the department refused to open the files. Nothing could be proven, but McCarthy publicized his allegations and his suspicions proved effective in the Republican campaign to power.<sup>11</sup> After the subcommittee was discharged, McCarthy campaigned heavily to get Tydings defeated based on his less than vigorous investigations of communist activities and succeeded. At the same time, a number of other incumbent Democrats lost their seat in Congress. Anti-communism indeed turned out to be a successful election issue for the Republican Party.

President Truman wanted to avoid accusations of being soft on communism. He also needed support for his foreign policy of containing the expansion of the Soviet influence. Linking these two, he actually helped Republicans by unintentionally giving legitimacy to accusations that indeed there might be communists in the State Department. He authorized a loyalty review program among the federal government employees through Executive Order 9835 in March of 1947 just nine days after his Truman Doctrine speech.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately the program did not make

a distinction between individual disloyalty and political radicalism and safeguards for individual rights were subverted or abandoned. It proved easier to wrong an innocent person than to risk a potential subversive to escape the net. This program soon spread to the state and local level. Particularly schools, industries and media became targets.<sup>13</sup> Combined with McCarthy's investigations, an actual witch-hunt developed. In this atmosphere anyone suspected of communist sympathies faced dismissal from government jobs, few states allowed alleged communist sympathizers to teach, academic freedom was compromised and ideas considered out of the mainstream were abhorred.<sup>14</sup> HUAC investigated Hollywood due to the movie industry's ability to "pollute" the mainstream mind through plays and movies. The Senate Appropriations Committee and Senator Karl Mundt's (a Republican from South Dakota) special subcommittee officially identified homosexuals as deviant and national security risks because they were emotionally "unstable" and therefore susceptible to Soviet blackmail.<sup>15</sup>

Conservative small-business interests seeking to undercut Fair Deal reforms supported Joseph McCarthy. He was able to draw funding from affluent contributors and therefore enjoyed continuing prestige among party leaders. That made him difficult to oppose. While McCarthyism was obviously a product of the cold war tensions, it was also politics firmly rooted in the conservative reaction to the New Deal and in the Republican drive for power after long Democratic domination in the government and Congress. The broad liberal coalition of that era was also its first casualty and tolerance its second. What greatly contributed to the hysteria was the traditional American fear of radicalism. American anti-communism went all the way back to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Since 1938 the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives (HUAC) had investigated alleged communists in the government.<sup>16</sup> Its most famous member, future president Richard Nixon defended his H.R. 5852, a bill to protect the United States against un-American and subversive activities, as a necessary compliment to the existing legislation. The bill did not pass, largely because it went too far in effect trying to make



communism in the United States illegal. Henry Wallace testified strongly arguing that the bill was in reality aimed at all organizations opposing the cold war consensus, which argued that the United States faced a worldwide conspiracy.<sup>17</sup> However, a similar act, the 1954 Communist Control Act, did pass and made membership in the Communist Party illegal.

McCarthy's accusations were above all well-timed coming early in 1950 soon after the "fall" of China to Mao's communists, first detonation of atom bomb by the Soviet Union and during Alger Hiss's perjury trial. State Department employee Hiss's unclear communist associations became a symbol of New Deal liberalism and Yalta conference internationalism and seemed to confirm the existence of an internal security threat.<sup>18</sup> H.R. 5852 co-sponsor, Senator Karl Mundt was the most prominent member of Congress's "China-lobby" and charged that Democrats were a party of "Korea, communism and corruption."<sup>19</sup> Demagoguery during the rising tide of traditional anti-communism found reception among those believing that Roosevelt and Truman had created a sort of "fifth column" of New Dealers who had "sold" east central Europe to the Soviet Union. Republicans wanted to believe that post-war communist advances were made possible by the New Dealers' "great conspiracy." Fair Deal seemed a similar conspiracy as well and Marshall Plan propped up socialist enterprises abroad.<sup>20</sup> McCarthy and his supporters saw the communist threat as primarily domestic and therefore accused New Deal of being alien, even communistic, and definitely un-American. Because they did not see the Soviet Union as the primary threat, they opposed the Truman administration's commitment to containment and foreign aid.<sup>21</sup> Quite clearly the Republicans played politics; tired of the long Democratic control of the White House, they needed an issue and found one in anti-communism.

In this conservative backlash to the New Deal, the gains that minorities had made in the society—in employment, housing and social security—were threatened. While few conservatives actually directly attacked New Deal gains, few additional advances were made and existing

programs faced funding cuts. It is no wonder that Truman's Fair Deal, which proposed increased social security, fair employment practices, desegregation and civil rights legislation, got nowhere. The developing cold war consensus called for national unity in the struggle against the communist menace. Not only should the nation rid itself of internal subversion and suspected communists or their sympathizers, but the disenfranchised—women, blacks, Hispanics and Indians—should sacrifice their immediate needs for the common good. Minorities and immigrants were easy targets for those searching for deviant behavior. Advocating civil rights easily made one appear disloyal.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the United States became painfully aware that the rhetoric of world leadership based on moral and democratic grounds was lacking as long as blacks were denied full citizenship rights. Truman's Executive Order 9981 of July 26, 1948, indeed started the desegregation in the armed forces. However, the process was slow and largely symbolic in the beginning, partially promoted to alleviate African-American radicalism. Truman's Executive Order 9808 of December 5, 1946, created a presidential civil rights committee, which published its report "To Secure These Rights" on October 29, 1947. The committee emphasized the need of the federal government to assume greater responsibilities in civil rights because only it had sufficient power. The report started an educational campaign and Truman endorsed the report in his special address to Congress on February 2, 1948. Yet no civil rights legislation followed for the next nine years. With conservative Congress, Truman concentrated on his priority, the foreign policy.<sup>23</sup>

In this political atmosphere, Native Americans' status as a specially legislated domestic minority came under scrutiny. The economic and political gains they had made during the New Deal came under attack as President Truman's Indian policy did not recognize their special needs. In addition, the anti-communist hysteria found an easy target in the smallest of American minorities. The key New Deal measure in Indian Affairs was the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. One of its major provisions authorized the secretary of the interior to restore to tribal ownership the remaining unallotted lands on the reservations. It established the sum of ten million dollars as a revolving credit

fund which made loans to tribes and individual Indians. It also legislated for setting up new tribal governments with at least some degree of self-determination and allowed Indian tribal religions, cultures and languages to flourish.<sup>24</sup> For the first time in United States Indian policy, the government attempted to add to the tribal land base in reservations. Unlike in the turn of the twentieth century, during the economic depression there was little demand for reservation lands from western industrialists, farmers and lumber interests. As there was no pressure to rid Indians of their property and no jobs in the cities, why not let Indians eke out existence on reservations?<sup>25</sup> The post-World War II economic boom in the West reversed this policy when the increased demand for Indian land again set the westerners' sights toward reservation resources.

The ideology of private property was the root of the problem. Despite the allotment of reservations to individual parcels between 1887 and 1934, tribes still owned land in common, which remained in federal trust. The use of these lands was restricted and non-Indians willing to purchase them had to go through an extensive bureaucracy. Tribal land had also been the target of assimilationists who believed that private ownership was a prerequisite for Indian integration. Conservative critics saw New Deal Indian policies, which emphasized community, as communistic. Even many Indians shared this view. These problems only intensified with the United States entry into World War II, when Indian resources suddenly proved invaluable for the national economy.

World War II proved to be a watershed in Indian-white relations. First major change came with Indian relocation from reservations to cities. Through military service and war-related jobs, Indians had more contact with white society than ever before because the War Department encouraged the integration of Indians into all branches of the military. The existing land base could support only a part of the Indian population, so many started moving to cities where jobs now were available. Indians' war-time movement to cities gave an impetus for the government to assist this relocation after the war. By assisting Native Americans in their movement to cities, the

government officials hoped to assimilate Indians. Simultaneously, the number of Indians the government should protect and assist on the reservations would decrease. Off-reservation tribal members would not be eligible for government services in the reservations.<sup>26</sup> Moving Indians to cities was also a cheaper option than improving reservation infrastructure in order to attract industries. As long as reservation development lacked behind the efforts to relocate Indians, they ultimately had only one option, leaving the reservation, to make a living.<sup>27</sup>

Relocation was related to the congressional decision to dissolve the special trust relationship between the federal government and the reservations. This relationship was based on hundreds of treaties that the federal government signed with tribes in the course of the nineteenth century. In this sense, the 1946 mid-term elections turned out to be very significant for American Indians. The Republican resurgence brought to Congress a number of conservative mid-westerners and westerners who called for tax breaks, reductions in the size of the federal government and the end of the New Deal reforms. Some of these congressmen occupied positions in public lands and Indian affairs committees where they called for an end to the federal responsibilities in Indian affairs through a transfer of the activities of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to states and local governments. What united these men was that they all were ardent anti-communists, opposed the New Deal and Fair Deal reforms and feared that the federal government was too big and expensive. They argued that Indians should lose their special status, even if this status was based on treaties, because they did not pay property taxes and were slow to assimilate. Their goal was to terminate reservations and fully assimilate Indians to the general population without special tribal rights and lands. These goals, and the rhetoric supporting them, fit well into the cold war consensus that tribal societies with communal land ownership were socialistic and therefore un-American and suspect.

Karl Mundt was a veteran congressman. During the war, when he was still a representative, Mundt strongly urged the liquidation of the

Bureau of Indian Affairs because of its inefficiency and stated that a complete investigation of bureau services was necessary in order to view Indian readiness for assimilation.<sup>28</sup> Francis Case, another Republican Representative from South Dakota, argued that because Indians could not use (or sell) their property without the permission of the secretary of the interior, they were not beneficiaries of their citizenship status. He introduced a number of bills aiming to provide for removal of restrictions on property of Indians, particularly war veterans, arguing that the question was

whether Indians shall be encouraged to remain an Indian and a citizen apart from other citizens, or whether he will be encouraged to become a part of general citizenship.<sup>29</sup>

Many of the advocates of federal withdrawal of termination believed that the more advanced Indian groups had achieved basic progress, that many of the BIA functions had already been transferred to the states and that Indian communities were unified and supported termination.<sup>30</sup> They were unwilling to find out the reality behind these myths.

The Senate Committee on Civil Service took the lead regarding cost-cutting in Indian affairs. Headed by William Langer, a Republican from North Dakota, the committee required the BIA to prepare a report on how the bureau was going to save money in Indian administration. Another western senator, Langer was a states rights advocate who favored economic development in the Indian country. To drive home the point that he disliked government restrictions on Indian property, Langer subpoenaed the Acting Com-

missioner of Indian Affairs, the BIA director, William Zimmerman to testify in front of the committee in February of 1947.<sup>31</sup> Zimmerman testified that the cut-down could be achieved in two ways: Either some or any of the services the Indian Bureau rendered to the tribes could be curtailed or eliminated or the number of Indians entitled to those services could be reduced. At the committee's request, Zimmerman had prepared a three-part list of Indian groups based on their estimated preparedness for termination. The list also provided a time-frame for federal withdrawal in Indian affairs.<sup>32</sup>

Further suggestions for funding cuts in Indian affairs followed. Public Law 162 of the 80th Congress established a highly influential and authoritative commission to make recommendations on how to achieve better economy and efficiency in the executive branch of the government. Chaired by former president Herbert Hoover, the commission took the administration of Indian affairs under review. It concluded that the goal should be complete integration of Indians and the end of the trust status of tribal lands:

When the trust status of Indian lands has ended, thus permitting their taxation, and surplus Indian families have established themselves off the reservation, special federal aid to state and local governments for Indian programs should end.<sup>33</sup>

This rhetoric reflected the cold war atmosphere. It is not surprising that Secretary of State Dean Acheson vice-chaired the Hoover Commission. What is surprising is that he actually opposed the transfer of federal responsibilities to the states. Notable was the absence of Native Americans in the commission or its committee on Indian Affairs.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to ideological and economic concerns, the human rights issue rose to the forefront in the emerging cold war atmosphere. There was a paradox involved in the United States concern for democracy abroad and its treatment of minorities at home. President Truman understood this and launched a civil rights program, which included Indians.<sup>35</sup> To the congressional liberals, who had begun to support the integration



The Official Seal of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes at the Flathead Reservation in Montana

of African-Americans, it seemed difficult to advocate continuing federal supervision of Native Americans, a policy which seemed to provide segregation. In contrast, those conservatives who proposed termination did not seem to be bothered by their views of African-American segregation. By arguing that Indian reservations promoted segregation while desegregation of African-Americans had started, the terminationists ignored the fundamental differences between blacks and Indians. While the former wanted to integrate and to have a chance for economic advancement, the latter saw integration as a vehicle to destroy the basis of their independence, the tribal ownership of property.<sup>36</sup> Where blacks had never owned large tracts of land, Indians had once controlled the entire continent.

Even if members of both parties advocated federal withdrawal from Indian affairs, attempts to legislate termination subsided after the Democrats regained control of Congress in the 1948 elections. But once the Republicans gained a slim majority in 1952, these efforts reappeared. Meanwhile President Truman nominated Dillon S. Myer the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in early 1950. During World War II Myer had served as director of the War Relocation Authority, a temporary agency which interned Japanese-Americans from the West Coast in ten inland camps and relocated them to various locations after the war. Truman chose Myer because he would follow the congressional mood and the Hoover Report's intent to terminate federal supervision of Indian affairs.<sup>37</sup> Myer agreed with the congressional movement to transfer BIA services, such as health care, to other federal and state agencies or to tribal governments. He emphasized the need to carry out this transfer in close cooperation with Indians. Yet, in reality, Myer did not tolerate opposition. He emphasized to his staff that in case Indians did not consent to his policies, they should be carried on anyway.<sup>38</sup> Myer managed to start withdrawal through administrative means. He initiated federal assistance to relocation by opening placement centers in western and midwestern cities, and ordered every bureau agency to start preparing termination programs and report to him.<sup>39</sup>

Western land and water interests played perhaps the most important part in the ter-

mination movement. The terminationists were from western states gaining votes from resource interests hungry for restricted Indian lands. Cold war contributed to an economic boom and increased the nation's need for raw materials such as uranium, found in many reservations, but reservation trust lands could be opened to private development only through congressional action. Myer cooperated with western congressmen such as Senator Patrick "Pat" McCarran, a Democrat from Nevada, who advocated freeing tribal lands from federal supervision. He chaired the Judiciary Committee, and introduced an Internal Security Act (McCarran Act) against alleged communist subversion in 1950. The act permitted deportation of suspected alien subversives and prosecution of communists and their sympathizers. It passed over President Truman's veto in the election year, when few congressmen dared oppose it. McCarran also co-introduced a new and more restrictive immigration act (McCarran-Walter Act) in 1952.<sup>40</sup> Given these initiatives, it can be no surprise that McCarran viewed Indians as supporters of alien political ideology. McCarran also protected white settlers who dammed the Truckee River in Nevada and threatened Paiute Indians' fishing industry. When Paiutes argued for their right to sue and choose an attorney of their own choice, McCarran noted that they therefore seemed able to handle all of their affairs without federal supervision.<sup>41</sup>

Senator Arthur Watkins, a Republican from Utah and a member of the class of 1946, chaired the Indian Affairs Subcommittee and almost single-handedly dictated congressional Indian policy after 1952. To him, Indians only seemed to want more federal money, less federal control on how to spend it and no state authority or supervision. Watkins believed that everyone should achieve their goals without government assistance, regardless of circumstances.<sup>42</sup> Watkins was a Mormon. His religious background made a difference in his attitudes toward Native Americans. The Mormon faith considered Indians as a "fallen race" that needed to be lifted. He also had a strongly pro-business orientation. Watkins argued that keeping Indian lands in federal trust yielded the fundamental reason for the Indians' slow rate of "progress," not the aridity of their land base. He also believed that Indian opposition



to termination stemmed from the desire to avoid paying taxes, conveniently ignoring the fact that Indians paid taxes on everything but their land if it remained in trust status.<sup>43</sup> Watkins arrogantly believed that he knew what was best for the Indians: "They want the guardianship to continue; but in my opinion it would be in their best interests for them to be on their own."<sup>44</sup> He treated tribal members who opposed his views contemptuously, particularly if they did not fulfill his image of a "real Indian," that is, someone over one-half Indian blood.<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, while Watkins chaired the Senate select committee to censure McCarthy after his fall from favor in 1954, most other western Republicans, such as Langer, Mundt and Barry Goldwater of Arizona, supported McCarthy until the end.<sup>46</sup>

Representative E.Y. Berry, another South Dakota Republican, chaired the House Indian Affairs Subcommittee. He, too, opposed the New Deal and had a pro-business orientation. He viewed reservations as the last exploitable frontier regions. He argued that the Indian Reorganization Act and reservations were socialistic, and advocated policies such as relocation to eliminate the need for the BIA.<sup>47</sup> The ability of few men such as Watkins and Berry to dominate congressional policies on Indian affairs reflected the low priority that Indian affairs had in Congress and exemplified the power that committee chairmen possessed.

On August 1, 1953, Congress passed, with minimal discussion, the House Concurrent Resolution 108. The resolution stated:

Indians should be made subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States.

Further:

At the earliest possible time, all the Indian tribes should be freed from federal supervision and control and from all disabilities and limitations specially applicable to Indians.<sup>48</sup>

Although not an act, HCR 108 provided an affirmative step towards termination legislation.

It singled out four states (California, Florida, New York and Texas) and five tribes (Salish-Kootenai, Klamaths, Menominees, Potawatomis and Turtle Mountain Chippewas) as starting points for termination. That these particular states and tribes were picked was no accident. Indians within the selected four states were fragmented and without significant land base and the tribes mentioned were considered ready because they had considerable resources.

Prompted by HCR 108, Watkins and Berry organized their subcommittees for joint hearings on twelve termination bills in 1954. Hearings followed a familiar pattern: Watkins argued aggressively for termination because, according to him, tribes did not pay taxes, their progress was slowed because of federal supervision and reservations were communist strongholds. All in all, withdrawal bills on six of these twelve bills passed, including Menominees and Klamaths, and six others passed eventually, the latest in 1962. If the state and tribal representatives opposed bills regarding their reservations, the bills did not pass. If their opposition was lacking, bills passed.<sup>49</sup> Even if some reservations were terminated as late as 1962, HCR 108 ran out of gas after Watkins-Berry hearings proved that tribal readiness had been misjudged and many bills failed. In 1958, the Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton admitted that HCR 108 should be an objective, not an immediate goal. He did not formally repudiate the resolution, but stated that:

No consideration shall be given to forcing upon an Indian tribe or group a so-called termination plan which does not have the understanding and acceptance of a clear majority of the members affected.<sup>50</sup>

Not coincidentally, most intense communist hysteria had by then subsided.

That HCR 108 did not result in more successful termination bills was due to the American Indians' resistance. In the years during and following World War II, Native Americans became increasingly outspoken in their opposition to government policies. The threat of federal government withdrawing from Indian affairs and pan-Indianism rediscovered during the war-time

experiences in the battlefields and factories contributed to an unprecedented show of activism. The 1944 founding of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) signaled the transition, but the oft-criticized tribal governments founded by the IRA also figured in. Tribal opposition to termination started immediately with the rise of the policy, yet it did not gather power before early 1950s, when Native American groups and tribes took the lead of the opposition. Their criticism proved decisive as it appeared that Indians, despite rhetoric to the opposite, did not support the policy en masse.

The NCAI offered a forum for the tribes and individual Indians to express their thoughts on Indian affairs. The NCAI limited its membership to tribes or tribal members. Its leaders, such as noted author and scholar, Salish-Kootenai D'Arcy McNickle, and Cherokee Ruth Bronson, had become accustomed to the intricacies of the United States political system as a result of the Indian Reorganization Act. They did not respond passively to the threat of termination. While many NCAI members were tired of federal regulations and wanted Indians to have a chance to take charge of their own affairs, they did not want a complete end to the federal supervision. Their self-rule stressed tax-free land, Indian self-government protected by legal rights, economic development on reservations and consultation with Indians in the shaping of policies.<sup>51</sup>

Ruth Bronson served as the first executive secretary of the NCAI. A BIA employee during the New Deal, she believed that the Indian Reorganization Act was a step to the right direction. She opposed termination from the outset and inspired the NCAI to play a significant role in the Native American battle against the policy. While acknowledging that Indians wanted and had been promised self-determination, she did not think this should be achieved in one big sweep of legislation. Release from federal wardship would "play into the hands of those predatory individuals who are constantly watching to exploit him [Indian]."<sup>52</sup> Bronson criticized the whole termination philosophy of "freeing Indians from government wardship" as being based on misconceptions about the nature of federal trusteeship in Indian affairs. Indians were not

restricted in their life as the terminationists argued and the special privileges they had were bargained as an exchange for valuable landholdings.<sup>53</sup>

Tribal representatives understood that assimilation was not inevitable. Above all, they wanted to keep tribal lands intact. Termination advocates never considered giving the reservation title to a tribe as a group in toto. Under this scenario, federal supervision could be withdrawn, but instead of trying to form a corporation with tribal members as shareholders or letting individuals pull out their assets, both of which the termination bills proposed, full title could be given to the entire tribe as an entity. That would mean giving land title to tribal governments in tax-free status to be kept intact and run by the tribe without government supervision. Certainly western congressmen could not consider this kind of a notion, proposed by Indian groups, because it would have kept reservation lands intact under communal ownership and would not have added land to the taxable wealth in the region.

Tribal governments knew land was at stake and with land the entire future of tribal cultures and lifestyles. It is useful here to consider the arguments of one case study briefly. The Bureau of Indian Affairs considered the Flathead Reservation in western Montana and the Salish-Kootenai peoples occupying it as one of the primary candidates for immediate withdrawal of government services in part because almost two-thirds of tribal members were less than half-blood Indians. The BIA acknowledged that as the result of termination, tribal holdings would have to be liquidated because a high amount of tribal members liked to cash in their assets. The BIA admitted that there was some question about the ability of the state and local governments to absorb the costs of withdrawn government services from local taxes.<sup>54</sup>

The Salish-Kootenai tribal leaders had been aware of the upcoming withdrawal legislation since 1946. Taxation and treaty rights provided the key points in the tribal council's unanimous opposition to withdrawal. The tribe held that its lands should not be taxed because tax exemption was a privilege provided by the treaty the tribe had signed with the United States in 1855. Many

people could not afford to pay property taxes and would lose their land. Termination would only bring hardship to tribal members.<sup>55</sup> Chairman Walter McDonald believed that the people had been self-supporting thanks to the Indian Reorganization Act, which termination would nullify. He suggested that there were tribal members not interested in the reservation because they had lost their allotments and now favored liquidation of tribal assets for cash. McDonald thought that these members should be released on a voluntary basis, but that the rest should continue as before.<sup>56</sup>

The tribal council contacted all the state offices pointing out that proposals, instead of decreasing costs of reservation administration, would only transfer the burden from the federal government to local and state governments, who would have to pick up the tab of increased welfare costs to prevent starvation. State government, after initial hesitation, agreed, and pressured Montana's relatively liberal Democratic Senators in the United States Congress, Mike Mansfield and James Murray, to oppose termination legislation. D'Arcy McNickle eloquently opposed the Flathead termination bill in the Watkins-Berry hearings of February 1954:

The pressure to get it [assets] divided up is going to be awfully great on the part of people who tomorrow, after they get it, may regret that kind of solution. And it is difficult, under this proposed legislation, to get any other kind of result.<sup>57</sup>

Tribal leaders did not argue against a reasonable bill towards ultimate withdrawal, conceding as inevitable such a course of action. But at that time the effects on tribal welfare, assets and rights would be tragic.<sup>58</sup>

As chairman McDonald acknowledged, the Salish-Kootenai tribe was divided. Many individuals, mostly those living off the reservation and of lower Indian blood, wanted to end the trust status of reservation lands, divide up the tribal property and get their share in cash. They were making a better living than those on the reservation and felt that the tribal membership had nothing to offer besides small annual

payments. One tribal member believed that many had advanced through their own efforts and were capable and willing to fulfill their obligations as United States citizens.<sup>59</sup> The main Salish termination advocate, Lorena Burgess, had a chance to present her views in the Watkins-Berry hearings. She and her supporters utilized cold war rhetoric by labeling the tribal government based on the Indian Reorganization Act as socialistic. They also complained about the manner in which the council ran tribal affairs.<sup>60</sup> While Burgess herself was a former council member and lived on the reservation, most of her supporters lived off it and were of marginal tribal blood. All in all, they remained a minority and did not succeed in cashing in on the tribe. The Flathead termination bill never emerged from the committee due to the triple opposition of the tribal council, state officials and Montana's delegation in the United States Congress.

While the Salish-Kootenai succeeded in defeating termination legislation regarding their reservation, some other tribes were not as lucky. Menominees in Wisconsin, Klamaths in Oregon and Uintah-Ouray Uintahs in Utah were terminated. They could not trump up effective opposition due to their intense factionalization. Partially for that reason, the Wisconsin, Oregon and Utah officials were non-committal in regard to termination. Of course, Senator Watkins was from Utah, which contributed greatly to the lack of state interest. When the Uintah-Ouray Tribe appeared to oppose his proposals, Watkins simply pushed through legislation that terminated those under one-half Indian blood from tribal membership.<sup>61</sup>

Even if the cold war reached its height in the early 1960s and continued through to at least late 1980s, in American Indian affairs the high point came in 1954. After that year the most restrictive policies slowly faded and self-determination took priority in the 1960s. By mid-1960s, the disastrous effects of termination appeared clear to all Menominee, and they successfully organized a grass-roots organization to regain the reservation. They found success with the Menominee Restoration Act of 1973, which returned the reservation and federal services.<sup>62</sup> The Klamaths regained their services in 1986, but not the

reservation and land. Despite occasional resurgence, termination of federal services and the disappearance of the BIA have not taken place, even if many tribes, including the Salish-Kootenai, have voluntarily and willingly taken over the management of most federal programs.

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# Joy Harjo

## *The Language of Poetic Justice*

### *Interview with Catrin Gersdorf*

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Joy Harjo, born in Tulsa, Oklahoma and an enrolled member of the Mvskoke (Creek) tribe, is one of the most prolific voices in contemporary American poetry. She has published four books of poetry: *What Moon Drove Me to This* (1979), *She Had Some Horses* (1983), *In Mad Love and War* (1990), for which she received the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1991, and *The Woman Who Fell From The Sky* (1994). *Secrets from the Center of the World* (1989) is a small volume of prose vignettes coupled with abstract photographs of sparse southwestern landscapes. In 1996, Laura Coltelli published *The Spiral of Memory*, a collection of various interviews given by Joy Harjo between 1985 and 1994. Harjo's most recent work includes *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America* (1997), a book she edited in collaboration with Gloria Bird, *A Map to the Next World: Poems* (2000), a children's book called *The Good Luck Cat* (2000), and *Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century*, a CD that was released in the fall of 1996 and which introduces her as a musician. Her intertribal band, *Poetic Justice*, joins a poet (Joy Harjo, voice and saxophone), an Indian water rights attorney (Susan Williams, drums), a tribal judge (Willie Bluehouse Johnson, guitar), two educators (Sue's brother John, bass, and Frank Poocha, voice and keyboards), and a stock clerk (Richard Carbajal, guitar) who all consider music one way of working for justice. The booklet that comes with the CD describes the band's name as "a term of grace, expressing how justice can appear in the world despite forces of confusion and destruction." (For more information about the band see <http://hanksville.phast.umass.edu/defs/independent/PoeticJustice/index.html>.)

The following fax interview was inspired both by Joy Harjo's poetry and the concert given at the Spizz, a jazz club in Leipzig, Germany, on June 18, 1997.

**Q:** *In the summer of 1997 you and your band Poetic Justice traveled Europe to perform in Germany and Italy. When and why did you decide to present your poetry as part of a jazz concert rather than as a conventional reading?*

**JH:** Poetry and music have always belonged together. When I began to write poetry it was the music in the poetry that intrigued me as much as the other elements that have to do with the creation of poetry. Of course, I haven't always performed music with poetry. It came about later, as I took up the saxophone and then was able to put together a band that mixed elements of music that matter to our lives as indigenous peoples living at the end of the century. We don't call what we do as jazz, or as a jazz performance. We call our music a mix, a kind of "tribal-jazz-reggae-poetic-rock."

**Q:** *How did you come up with the name for the band, was it your first choice or did you play around with other names before Poetic Justice became Poetic Justice?*

**JH:** The name of the band came on a flight somewhere over the U.S. Sue Williams and I had been wrestling with the idea for a name, and like many questions you have to let it go so the answer can find you. The answer came as if it came from the sky. Poetic Justice. It was perfect.

**Q:** *During the concert you not only chant your poetry but you also play the saxophone. How did you become interested in this instrument?*

**JH:** I've always loved the saxophone. It sounds like the human voice. And like many of the musics we play which are born out of revolutionary ideas

and movements, the saxophone was a revolutionary instrument. It was born in Belgium, invented by Adolf Sax who caught all kinds of hell for inventing such a thing. He was castigated; the horn was an outcast. It finally found its place in American music, particularly in jazz.

*Q: How do you select the poems that you use for "lyrics"? Is it primarily the inherent musicality of a poem? Or is it its subject matter? Or both? Could you, please, describe the process?*

**JH:** The process of selecting poems for lyrics varies. I brought "She Had Some Horses" to a band rehearsal because I wanted to make a song. John Williams suggested a chord or two, we jammed then I found the melody on the horn. We worked from there. John brought in several song ideas he had been carrying around. Some ideas suggested particular themes, styles. For instance, a latin tune matched with my poem, "The Real Revolution is Love." Most of the poems are inherently musical. I sometimes revise them to fit the shape of the music. We bend the musical shape too to fit the poetic line.

*Q: Within the oral tradition audience participation is crucial for the creation of a text. How do different audiences react to and influence your work?*

**JH:** This is a very different philosophical perspective regarding the creation of literature and the field in which it interacts, during, after, and before the creative act than is currently in vogue in circles of literary criticism. I don't believe that the text exists without the creator of the text, just as I don't believe we exist without embodying that which created us. The idea is preposterous, but this is what happens when foolish humans attempt to sever the cord between the head and the heart. I speak before many different audiences all over the U.S. and now in the world, including most recently Israel, Egypt, Italy and Germany. I've spoken with all-Indian audiences. It's different in that many of the references and landscapes are more recognizable, less introduction needed. And of course that varies; there is a difference between Mvskoke audiences, Navajo audiences, those more urban, those more rural. They immediately recognize what I am doing. Recently a very traditional plains tribe man from the North asked

to speak to me after a reading. I was touched when he thanked me for the manner in which I performed. Told me he was raised by his grandparents who raised him in his traditional language with traditional values. They spoke to him in a similar manner as my performance, using songs interspersed with stories, poems.

My work translates to non-Indian audiences, too. I believe it's universal. The human heart is universal. I've had enthusiastic reactions to my work. Part of it has to do with the performance of it, something that has developed naturally as I have practiced and performed consistently for a while now. Some landscapes, audiences move me deeply, influence me. My trip to the Middle East opened something deep that I can't quite explain yet, but I see it unraveling in my new work...

*Q: What does it mean to you to perform your poetry outside the United States?*

**JH:** Performing poetry outside one's own country is something I practiced for before leaving the U.S.. When I went to graduate school in the middle of America I went as a representative of my native community in the southwest. Though we were all writing in English, my poetry was often perceived as foreign, exotic. It still is by the poetry elite in this country. That's the nature of being Indian in America, and perhaps most places in the world, thanks to the proliferation of romantic and stereotypical images of Indians by the colonizers. I have performed poetry in many countries in the Americas, as well as Europe and the Middle East. I always question how the writing is being perceived, if the references translate, and am aware that I am not performing in the native language of most of my international audiences. Even when I performed in England, the sensibility of the English language there is different from American English.

*Q: In another interview you once said that "it's always stimulating to be in some other place in the world, for perspective." Has the trip to Germany and Italy been satisfactory in that respect?*

**JH:** I have been to Germany and Italy several times. Each journey is different, marked by time, circumstance, and varying casts of characters. This

last visit was the first time I traveled abroad with my whole band, a band of six members (including me) and two band members' wives. It was stressful because I am the manager, so a focus was making sure details were taken care of for everyone. But perspective comes despite or maybe because of hardships. It's not easy traveling in an unknown language, when language is a prime means of communication. It's as if one's tongue has been cut out. You depend on translators and the other senses. The perspective shifts. You never know what you will find. Once I traveled to Sami country in north Norway. I felt a kinship with the people. We found it with each other: One afternoon we stood on a hill overlooking the town of Tromsø. I understood, in the way that understanding comes through the cells of the heart, that my spirit would be taken care of there, in that place, if I were to die there. A strange thought, totally unexpected, but absolutely true, I'm sure.

**Q:** *In your professional life you have not only worked as a poet and a musician but also as a professor of literature. Has being an academic influenced your work as an artist for better or for worse?*

**JH:** I was always a reluctant professor. I am not a scholar, I am a writer, an artist. I studied as a writer in non-traditional programs, came to teaching as a way to make a living. Yet, I've learned that teaching is an art, a worthy art, one of the most important. I respect that art and am a much better teacher than when I first began as an undergraduate, when I participated as an artist-in-the-schools in New Mexico. Because I respect the art I decided to bow out of it full-time. I was burning out. I also wished to devote my time to the development of my writing and music. I quit an academic position as full professor with a decent salary and benefits to do my art full time. I'm viewed by some as being brave, others as foolish. I knew I had to do what I needed to do, take a risk.

**Q:** *Okay then, let's shift the conversation to questions on your work and your position as a poet in*

*the United States. The New York Times has recently published an article on a new generation of Native American writers. W.W. Norton, a major publisher known for its impact on the formation of the canon of American literature, has not only published your most recent collection of poetry The Woman Who Fell From the Sky (1994) but also Reinventing the Enemy's Language (1997), an anthology of contemporary Native American women's writings edited by yourself and Gloria Bird. How do you interpret the growing national interest in Native American literature?*

**JH:** I don't think there's a growing national interest in Native American literature—maybe there is in so-called multicultural literature because America is suddenly realizing that the country is multicultural. Those at the top of the literary hierarchy still for the most part disregard anything that isn't European or Euro-American in concept or idea, and many feel threatened by this "new" flood of writing by those who don't look to Europe for ideas, language sensibility, or other sustenance. Yes, some of us have been published by major presses, but there are many who are disregarded. Or if we are published there isn't the push to distribute because we are considered such a minority in population numbers that the question always arises as to an "audience" for anything Indian. Most of the commercially successful books around the topic of native peoples are written by non-Indians. For some reason the non-Indian audience would seem (if

sales are an indication) to prefer to hear about us via non-Indians. I think there's a subconscious fear of Indians that was planted by the Puritans when this country was first settled by Europeans. A few years ago the book that was touted as the closest thing to Alex Haley's *Roots* was a novel by a non-Indian woman. It was a poorly-written novel, and non-authentic in character and tone. Louise Erdrich, Sherman Alexie, and sometimes Leslie Silko have managed to break through this.

**Q:** *How would you describe your own position in the chorus of Native American literary voices? You get a*



Joy Harjo during her concert in Leipzig, Germany, on June 18, 1997. Photograph by Karin Wieckhorst © 1997.



mention in the NYT article. Do you think that your poetic personae are adequately represented in an essay that describes the "Indian in literature" as being "more hard edged, urban and pop oriented?"

JH: I don't know how to describe my position ... I always think of making my own place despite the current around me. Besides, I'm a poet, and now a saxophonist. Poets often aren't considered as "literature" when native literature is discussed—most of the discussion is around novelists, fiction, or has been. I think that's changing however and will continue to change. *The New York Times* article gave me a nod, but the focus wasn't about poetry or music. They included me despite the article being about novelists.

Q: I'd like to focus in a little bit on one recurring motif in your writing which is linked to concepts of place and landscape. It struck me as important that in your poetry you always return to the same geographical locations: Alabama and Oklahoma, the Southwest and big cities such as Chicago and New York. These landscapes seem to have created you as poet, is that right?

JH: It comes down to perspective, and common sense. Which is larger, humans or the landscape? We also don't take into consideration the interaction that is inherent in being a living creature in this place. Of course the interaction, or awareness differs from culture to culture. The culture of buying and selling as the primary cultural interchange will see the landscape as something to be exploited. Others understand that the Sun, for instance, is a living entity, and speak to the Sun, just as the Earth, too, is living.

Q: In her book *Desert Passages* (1985), historian Patricia Nelson Limerick has stated that for most 19th century Americans "the desert was an irrational environment." Many of the 20th century (ab)uses of the desert result from this perception. In *Secrets from the Center of the World*, a book that you published in collaboration with photographer Stephen Strom in 1989, the desert is a place where one "may enter galactic memory" and listen to distinct historical voices. In other words, the desert is the rational and emotional center, the epistemological ground of human existence, whereas the highway which traverses the desert and which is a

historically and culturally laden symbol of both progress and freedom, gets marginalized. It demarcates the edge of the world. With this imagery, writing about landscape, or, in other words, the poetic representation of landscape, becomes a highly political act, an act of poetic justice. Would you agree?

JH: Yes.

Q: Your poetry is also interested in the metaphoric dimensions of landscape. The body is one such metaphoric landscape. Both bodies and landscapes are fragile and powerful at the same time. Is pointing at this analogy a conscious attempt to add an erotic dimension to ecology on the one hand and an ecological dimension to erotics on the other?

JH: One aspect of experience with the landscape is sensual identification. It's a natural response. We're biological, of the same stuff.

Q: In "The Book of Myths" you say: "There is a Helen in every language; in American her name is Marilyn / but in my subversive country, / she is dark earth and round and full of names / dressed in bodies of women / who enter and leave the knife wounds of this terrifyingly / beautiful land; / we call ourselves ripe, and pine tree, and woman." It is interesting to me that in your "subversive country" the gender of beauty is female but that your language refuses to give it just one name or even a particular shape. Could you comment on the interrelatedness of the land, women's bodies and beauty in your "country" as opposed to the countries of Greek and American mythologies?

JH: We aren't just one name, one ideal. Just as the landscape consists of desert, swamp, mountain, veldt so does the body and beauty have a range of aesthetics. To name a body, beauty or landscape as one more valuable over another is insanity. Yet, this kind of insanity is the status quo in a society that gains through exploitation of the land, the bodies of women, determines the shape of economy through these judgments. This kind of insanity infuriates me. It's destructive.

Q: Helen's beauty caused the Trojan War which, in turn, resulted in the destruction of the city. There is also a lot of speculation about self-destructive aspects in Marilyn Monroe's life. Do you think that the mythologized lives of Helen and Marilyn can serve

as an allegory for the culturally as well as ecologically devastating impact of Western concepts of beauty?

JH: Of course.

Q: In one of your early poems (*What Music*) you have a line that speaks about "the hot moist tropics of ... young womanhood." I like this image because of its implicit idea of life as a place, or rather as an experience of different places with different climates instead of an experience of passing, irretrievable time. In this view age becomes irrelevant. Would you go so far as to say that time, or to be more precise, the Western concept of time and its corollary values will eventually become irrelevant, too?

JH: I believe that all time exists simultaneously. There is interaction, interweaving.

Q: "What Music" is a poem that tells the story of a woman whose sons "live in another language in Los Angeles." I assume that this language is English. Do you, as a Native American poet, conceive of the English language as a place of exile? English, "the enemy's language," was once a crucial instrument for the colonization and destruction of tribal cultures on the North American continent. Now it seems to be an important tool that gives voice to the survivors of this history. How do you relate to this paradox?

JH: When I consider the tools of colonization, meant to destroy, then yes, as a Mvskoke citizen I consider the language a place of exile. Much of the culture continues without the English language. It continues in a place not inhabited by books or the ideas in books. Because of colonization we were moved far away from our original lands. We were also forced to learn English, to write in it. It is the language of commerce, but not particularly the language of ideas, of philosophy for the tribe. Many tribal members speak the language, most speak both languages. For myself it's the only language I know fluently, and it's a language I am trying to bend, via poetry, towards a sensibility of Mvskoke-ness, my concept from being part of the people. Yes, there's a paradox, a continuing paradox of using a language meant to destroy for renewal. But this life is a continuing series of paradoxes.

Q: Do you think that your view on this is representative of the larger community of Native American writers?

JH: Some may agree with me, others violently disagree. We are many nations/communities and within each tribe are various communities. We are like any other people. Those of us who have visibility in the Euro-American world are often seen to speak for all Indian people. This is preposterous. We are still individuals within nations, though when we hold positions of power we have to keep responsibility in mind, always.

Q: How important is it to you as an artist to mistrust any given boundaries, e.g. political boundaries which separate people and cultures, boundaries between artistic genres, boundaries between the textual and the non-textual world?

JH: I think one of the roles of the artist is to take the materials of chaos, what boundaries are made of, and use the stuff to create. I am born of many boundaries of race, culture, sex, idea. Creating poetry, music is how I continue to come to terms with paradox.

Q: In "A Postcolonial Tale" you say that "Stories and songs are like humans who when they laugh are indestructible." Today, if you switch on the TV at any given time, you can hardly avoid canned laughter. Has laughter been colonized by sit-coms and soap operas?

JH: I mean laughter that comes from the heart, the kind of laughter that makes you cry with recognition. No, I don't think laughter has been colonized by soap operas, but hey, I've lived in a soap opera before and laughter helped get me out of it!

Q: One last question—much of your poetry is concerned with the transformation of hatred into love. Earlier in this interview you mentioned one of your poems, "The Real Revolution is Love." Has love become a political statement at the end of the 20th century?

JH: Love is always a political statement, one of survival, of surviving beautifully.

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Dr. Catrin Gersdorf currently holds a grant from the German Research Association (DFG) to work on her habilitation *The Poetics and Politics of the Dessert in American Culture*.

# *The Challenge of Black Elk Speaks*

*Katharina Kracht*

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## Getting to Know Western Stereotypes, Yet Learning about Native American Cultures

Whether in popular culture or in supposedly scientific texts, stereotypical depictions of Native Americans can be found almost everywhere, even where one might least expect them. An analysis of Grade 8 English second language textbooks used in German Gymnasien and Realschulen demonstrates that even those who claim that it is their intention to, for example, “correct the cliché-like images produced through private reading and through films,”<sup>1</sup> are not effective in achieving what they set out to do. Textbook illustrations reproduce the stereotypical Indian in a headdress, no matter to which Native American culture they refer. Sentences like “Of course [the Indians] are allowed to leave the reservation”<sup>2</sup> reflect the understanding that it is the white culture who is benevolently and thus probably rightfully in control. One textbook talks about “die Indianerfrage,”<sup>3</sup> a phrasing which is highly problematic for several reasons. First of all, it sees the colonized culture as a problem, thus framing the topic completely within the colonizer’s mind set; and, quite scarily, it parallels the Nazis’ word choice of “die Judenfrage,” whose “final solution” we all have come to know as the holocaust. I have given this example not because I think that any of the authors of this textbook intends to build concentration camps for Native Americans, but because it points to just how problematic the relationship between Western cultures and those people who have been colonized for more than 500 years is and how this problem manifests itself in such seemingly unimportant things as the choice of words. These choices might sound trivial compared to the problems of right-wing extremism and racism in German society that are receiving more attention these months. But texts about colonized (“primitive”) cultures have been part of the colonizing project and served as a justification from the earliest colonial ventures

on, as some recent studies that draw attention to the way non-western cultures are produced for the Western imagination show.<sup>4</sup> For example, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. in the U.S. and Hartmut Lutz in Germany have shown that popular images of Native Americans are structured by the noble savage/bloodthirsty savage dichotomy.<sup>5</sup> These images are deeply embedded in cultural imaginations. Thus it often happens that society reproduces them even when some intend to debunk them.

Without intending to be reductive and without wanting to dismiss other important factors that contribute to and constitute racist violence, my suspicion is that part of the reason why “good Germans” watch silently when young skinheads chase African refugees through city streets at night might be the fact that as members of a colonizing culture, they all participate in a way of thinking that successfully “others” the victims of right-wing violence—a way of thinking that has also been produced through texts about “other” cultures.

In order to overcome stereotypes in cultural imagination and to arrive at a more appropriate and realistic idea of, for example, Native American peoples and their cultures, one must acknowledge that “the poetic and the political are inseparable,”<sup>6</sup> as James Clifford puts it. When reading any text about non-western cultures, one should always keep in mind that ethnography is “always caught up in the invention, not the representation, of cultures.”<sup>7</sup> This invention might serve as a justification of the colonial project, but it might also serve an allegorical function within the culture that produces the text, i.e. as an answer to questions which are relevant for the ethnographer’s culture.<sup>8</sup> These considerations, formulated only very shortly here, should draw

attention to the fact that writing about other cultures is “actively situated between powerful systems of meaning” and therefore by no means unproblematic. Westerners cannot simply teach one another culture—because there is no purely factual knowledge that one can have about it.

However, these premonitions should not lead us to think that there is no knowledge to be gained. In a world in which different cultures have to learn to live together, knowing about people different from oneself is extremely relevant. But one must consider that one’s ideas about other cultures are always gained within a certain framework which is determined by the culture in which one lives. In order to gain the most appropriate and realistic knowledge, one must reflect on this framework and remember that it might provide us with distorted images. A study of Native American culture that takes these things into consideration would thus always also be a study of Western culture and the way we produce our knowledge of the world.

This sounds like a complicated thing to achieve in a high school setting. I doubt that it can be achieved in Grade 8, when Native American cultures are supposed to be taught, at least not on such a conscious level. However, it is extremely important that teachers themselves understand how problematic our knowledge about Native American cultures is. The way western cultures produce knowledge about other cultures is a subject that should be discussed in history, politics and religion classes, and in any context in which non-western and colonized cultures are the subject. In the following, I want to suggest a way in which one Native American culture, that of the Oglala Sioux, can be usefully discussed in a foreign language classroom of the gymnasiale Oberstufe while also drawing attention to the way knowledge of this culture is produced.

The text I am suggesting is John G. Neihardt’s *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*,<sup>9</sup> published in 1932. The book tells the life story of a traditional Native American, born in 1863 before his culture had had much contact with the Whites. While he was still a child, American westward expansion began to seriously affect the land on which Black Elk’s

people had lived for generations. *Black Elk Speaks* tells not only of battles against the intruding Whites; it tells about Oglala culture before the Sioux were forced into reservations. The book includes Oglala myth, history, and stories, and—seemingly most important for Black Elk himself and the reason why he told the story to Neihardt in the first place—the narrative contains a detailed description of the vision that Black Elk had when he was lying ill at nine years of age. The vision is very long and intricate, and throughout the book we are always reminded of how important this vision was for Black Elk all his life. But before I take a closer look at Black Elk’s vision and what it can teach about his culture, I want to show how Neihardt’s text can teach about the way western culture achieves knowledge about non-western cultures.

### *The Writing of Black Elk Speaks*

Whether in a foreign language classroom or in private reading, in order to understand the problems and the possibilities of *Black Elk Speaks*, one must learn about the process by which Neihardt’s book was written. Then poet Laureate of Nebraska, John G. Neihardt met Black Elk on Pine Ridge Reservation the first time in August 1930. Black Elk, as a holy man of the Oglala Sioux, had been part of a religious revitalization movement, the ghost dance, that swept through the tribes of the plains before their defeat at Wounded Knee. Neihardt was working on his epic poem, *Cycle of the West*, and hoped to get important information about Sioux religion from Black Elk (BES vii). Black Elk seems to somehow have expected the white poet; he was willing to talk to him, and in the course of their initial conversation, the idea that Neihardt write down Black Elk’s life was conceived between the two men. Neihardt returned to Pine Ridge the following spring and with the help of his daughter Enid, who took down Black Elk’s account in shorthand, and of Ben Black Elk, the holy man’s son who translated Black Elk’s Lakota into English, a large pile of notes was produced. Also present were several other elders who, all of them being a few years older than Black Elk himself, helped to give a detailed account of historical events. The telling of Black Elk’s life story took several meetings over a few weeks, after which



Enid transformed her shorthand into typed notes. These, together with what he remembered of their conversation, were the basis for the book that Neihardt wrote.

Even before reading the book, one can learn something about it by just looking at this process. Many intermediaries were necessary to produce the text. Black Elk spoke and thought in Lakota, a language which Neihardt did not understand and whose concepts are very different from the English language in which Neihardt's book is written. Black Elk's culture had been exclusively oral before their encounter with the Europeans. The meeting was an encounter between individuals from very different cultures, one of which had dispossessed the other of their land, had destroyed a traditional way of life and was still threatening the survival of this culture. Furthermore, the two main contributors to *Black Elk Speaks* had different motivations. To teach about Native American culture is what Neihardt intended with his book. He stated in a letter to Black Elk: "I do feel that so much is known by you Indians that our white people do not know and should know, and I am very eager to write this book if you will help me."<sup>10</sup> Black Elk himself did not seem so much interested in teaching white people about his culture. Convinced of the relevance of his vision for the future of his nation, but at a point in history when his nation's survival may have seemed threatened, his main motivation was to pass on his vision and to save it from oblivion.

Nevertheless, for Black Elk and Neihardt themselves, the meeting between these people stands for more than a cultural encounter of contesting goals. As Raymond DeMallie points out repeatedly, verifying Neihardt's own account with commentaries of other witnesses, Black Elk and Neihardt seemed to have shared an affinity for each other that made them recognize the fellow mystic in each other, or as DeMallie puts it: "The mystic in Neihardt and the mystic in Black Elk were kindred souls."<sup>11</sup> The fact that Black Elk and his people adopted Neihardt and his family into the tribe<sup>12</sup> certainly shows that for Black Elk, Neihardt was not just another "Wasichu," a white man who betrays the Indians. If he had thought so, he need not have told him

the story of his life, and he certainly would not have told him of his vision. Black Elk seems to have felt Neihardt's sincerity.

From all this, one can learn that the process of producing Black Elk's narrative for a general (white) reading audience was an extremely complex one. Although both Black Elk and Neihardt were full of goodwill and tried to understand the other, each of them was naturally rooted in his own culture and misunderstandings and misrepresentations might well have resulted from this complicated situation. It would be an oversimplification to say that the process was smooth and unproblematic, and that therefore the text of *Black Elk Speaks* is an utterly reliable document of Lakota culture, but it would also ignore Black Elk's agency and Neihardt's serious attempt to understand Lakota culture to say the text is nothing but a distortion.

### *"The old man"—Black Elk as Vanishing Indian*

*Black Elk Speaks* tells the story of Black Elk's life up to the time of the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. The narrative starts with his early childhood, mostly with the memories of battles against the invading Whites. When Black Elk is nine years old, he falls ill and has the vision around which Neihardt's account of Black Elk's life-story is centered.

The first impression that one gets from Neihardt is, of course, the title he chose for his book. Black Elk is introduced as a holy man, with a somewhat old-fashioned choice of words ("[...] being the life story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux"). The reader then "meets" Black Elk "who lived among the barren hills some twenty miles east of the Agency" (BES xv), in a land in which "little else but weather ever happened...—other than the sun and the moon and the stars going over" (BES xvi) and where there is "little for the old men to do but wait for yesterday" (BES xvi). Neihardt, the poet, chooses lyric language to express a feeling of isolation and timelessness that he might have felt on his visit to Pine Ridge Reservation. Miraculously, Black Elk stands outside his hut, seemingly awaiting someone when Neihardt, his son and Flying Hawk, an interpreter,

arrive. Neihardt proposes to “get acquainted with him and have a little talk about old times” (BES xvii). Black Elk agrees, the men sit down; everybody is silent before Black Elk begins to speak and states that he perceives of Neihardt that the white man had “a strong desire to know the things of the Other World. He has been sent to learn what I know, and I will teach him” (BES xvii). The next thing Black Elk does is send his grandson to get a present for Neihardt, which Neihardt calls “a sacred ornament” which

had belonged to Black Elk’s father (who was also a holy man) and had been used for many years by both father and son in their sacred ceremonies. (BES xvii)

Black Elk is intuitive, and Neihardt makes clear how close Black Elk is to nature by paralleling Black Elk and the natural phenomena around him: “The sun was near setting when Black Elk said [...]” (BES xviii), “Soon I shall be under the grass and [what I know] will be lost,” spoken by Black Elk (BES xviii); when Black Elk replies to Neihardt’s question when he should come back, he says, “‘In the spring when the grass is so high’ (indicating the breadth of a hand) [(BES xviii)].”

In sum, Black Elk lives far away from white society, is connected with nature, is silent a lot, and when he speaks he utters matters of spiritual importance. It would not be too harsh to say that Neihardt, in this method of presentation, systematically romanticizes Black Elk. It seems that, within the noble savage/bloodthirsty savage dichotomy, Black Elk is clearly placed on the “noble” side.

Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. argues that the image of the noble savage finds its modification in the image of the vanishing Indian.<sup>13</sup> This is the paradigm under which anthropology of the 1930s operated. Anthropologists sent out their students to study the Indians before they were forever vanished and precious material would be irretrievably lost. Although Neihardt was not an anthropologist, one can assume that he also was influenced by the paradigm in academia of his time, especially since he follows this image of the vanishing Indian throughout the book. This is

made clear when considering that he chooses to begin telling Black Elk’s story in “the old times” (BES xvii) and “straight through Wounded Knee.”<sup>14</sup> For Neihardt, it is Wounded Knee that defines the end of traditional Sioux culture. The image he conveys of Black Elk totally functions within this paradigm. Black Elk is often referred to as “the old man” (BES xvi, xvii, xviii, xix, xv) and thus clearly associated with the past. But the things which Neihardt lets Black Elk speak support the image of the vanishing Indian more than these word choices. Black Elk says: “Our power is gone and we are dying, for power is not in us any more” (BES 196). He also says:

We began to feel homesick for our own country where we used to be happy. The old people talked much about it and the good days before the trouble came. Sometimes I felt like crying when they did that (BES 155).

But perhaps the strongest invocation of the image of the vanishing Indian is Black Elk’s often quoted oratory about the broken hoop of the nation and the dream of a nation that died in the snow at Wounded Knee. This, however, was invented completely by Neihardt.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly,



Dancer Performing at a Ceremony in North Dakota

biographical evidence suggests that Black Elk was not the broken man Neihardt portrayed him as. Not only had he had several children and was living with his second wife, but he was also active as a catechist for the Catholic mission on the reservation, thus preserving his role of a holy man for his people.<sup>16</sup> The fact that Black Elk had converted to Catholicism is completely left out by Neihardt and this can be seen as further proof of his romanticizing the old Native American, a strategy by which Neihardt preserves a sense of “pure culture” in the book. His perspective is clear: he is not interested in what happened after Wounded Knee and how the Plains tribes adapted to their new situation. Perhaps this again reflects the paradigm under which Neihardt was working which has no room for an Indian who refuses to vanish. There is, of course, a danger inherent in denying that Indians managed to adapt to the situation they found themselves in after the white Americans had formally taken over. As Jace Weaver argues, to see the Indian as vanishing makes it possible to see those

who refused to vanish as degraded and inauthentic and to contrast them with stereotypes of the ‘pure,’ ‘authentic’ *bon sauvage* or *sauvage noble* of the past and thus to keep Indians safely in the stasis box of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

Yet in order to make a fair assessment of Neihardt’s text—and not to underestimate Black Elk’s contribution to the text, which after all, was written through a collaborative effort—other information which the text presents must be considered. It is important to see in Neihardt a man of his times, but there are instances in which he transcends his times, where he, much more between the lines than directly, criticizes government policies.

It is important to keep in mind that Neihardt conceptualized his text in a time when not many people really wanted to hear what he had to say about Indians. We might understand why the book was only successful in attracting a large readership when it was reprinted in the 1960s when examining those instances in the text which offer a fairly direct criticism of American imperialism.

Through Black Elk’s accounts of his youth, Neihardt shows a society that was functioning and managing to provide its people with the necessary means of survival. Black Elk frequently tells of the obligation of the able hunters and richer families toward the poor, a value that endures after the Sioux are forced on reservations. One example of this is the distribution of foods after a hunt. Thus one of the leaders in the hunt speaks:

Good young warriors, my relatives, your work is good. What you do is good always; so today you shall feed the helpless. Perhaps there are some old and feeble without sons, or some who have little children and no man. You shall help these, and whatever you kill shall be theirs. (BES 56)

This was a great honor for young men.

A warrior who is brave is obliged “to give gifts to those who had least of everything, and the braver he was, the more he gave away”(BES 96). Keeping in mind that Neihardt published these words during the Great Depression, one can detect here some criticism of contemporary U.S. society. To emphasize the obligation of the rich toward the poor and of the able toward the weak can certainly be read as a critique of American ethics. By letting Black Elk relate that Native American societies had their own systems of dealing with poverty which might have been more successful than American policies of the moment, Neihardt indirectly calls into question the ideology of manifest destiny and the superiority of the U.S. system over Native American organization. Thus Neihardt romanticizes Black Elk and his society, but he does so for a reason, creating a space in which history can be told from the other side. This is especially valuable when teaching Black Elk and his people’s culture in a foreign language classroom. Instead of repeating a story that has been told thousand of times, the “Wild West” as seen through the Anglos’ eyes,<sup>18</sup> Black Elk’s account provides a chance to share the perspective of those about whom the ideology of manifest destiny said had to vanish to make room for progress—we can hear a voice usually silenced.

## Native American Culture in Black Elk Speaks

It is necessary to make a few comments on religion and culture before going on to an analysis of how Black Elk's vision and of how his culture is depicted in *Black Elk Speaks*. Black Elk certainly felt that the vision was given to him by the Grandfathers, not his biological ones, but by spiritual entities. Many Germans today will have problems understanding the reality of these personages as well as the approach toward these and other phenomena that someone like Black Elk perceived as religiously viable. Understanding somebody else's beliefs is often a problem, especially since German society is very secular. This paper advocates an approach that is grounded in Religious Studies.<sup>19</sup> Thus, when talking about a culture like Black Elk's, in which religion is completely embedded into daily life, one must try to understand and respect this attitude. No matter whether one personally believes in spiritual phenomena or not, for Black Elk and his people, they were as factual as the earth on which they walked. Religion, independently of what one does or does not believe today, was and still is a powerful force in Native American societies. To ignore the power of religion would be to deny one of Black Elk's basic assumptions about himself and his people.<sup>20</sup> A teacher who wants to teach Native American culture should be aware of this.

*Black Elk Speaks*, in many ways, demonstrates this integration of spirituality and ritual into the daily life of the community. Neihardt suggests that there was a time which was more traditional than the present for the people of Black Elk's culture, a time in which a sense of community coherence prevailed. This sense pervades all actions of Black Elk and his people. *Black Elk Speaks* recounts several incidents which illustrate how everyone in the tribe worked together.<sup>21</sup> In one scene, when Black Elk tells how he and his childhood friend would go fishing, the reader understands both how they ritualized the fishing and regarded their catch in connection to what it would mean to the community:

We always made an offering of bait to the fish, saying: 'you who are down in the water

with wings of red, I offer this to you, so come hither.' Then when we caught the first fish, we would put it on a forked stick and kiss it. (...) If we caught a little fish, we would kiss it and throw it back, so that it would not go and frighten the big fish. I don't know whether all this helped or not, but we always got plenty of fish and our parents were proud of us. We tried to catch as many as we could so that people would think much of us (BES 65).

When comparing this story to Enid's transcription,<sup>22</sup> it becomes clear that Neihardt has comprehensively edited this. In the original, Black Elk does not doubt the efficacy of the ritualized action, nor is this action described as individualized. In fact, one understands that this way of fishing was quite common and it is justified within the Oglala thinking:

The reason we talk to the fish is that we should be like relatives to all animals as I had seen in my vision.<sup>23</sup>

The two available descriptions of this incident, Enid's transcription being closer to what Black Elk really said than Neihardt's creative rendering of it, could be discussed in a class setting. The students could analyze the way Neihardt works as an author who has good intention and an understanding of Oglala culture, but who also has doubts about the efficacy of ritual. This incredulity is not astonishing for someone from a western culture and closer to what most pupils believe today. Nevertheless, there is no denial that the ritual might have worked. After all, Black Elk always caught a lot of fish.

The comparison of the two text demonstrates that Neihardt in a very poetically way changes the story: he shortens it, and he leaves one wondering whether or not Black Elk's ritual might have been effective. He acts as an intermediary between cultures. Although to a certain extent distorting the one he talks about, he nevertheless makes it understandable. And, significantly, he maintains the sense of community which shows through the words that Enid took down. This sense of community and of how the actions of





Tlingit Ritual Dancers from the American Northwest perform at the Midnight Sun Festival

the individual are always related to the meaning they have for the community is a recurring topic in *Black Elk Speaks*. It contributes greatly to the image that is conveyed about Oglala culture and how it is different and perhaps functions better than the white culture of Neihardt's time.

### *Black Elk's Vision*

The most outstanding example of obligation toward community is the one that Black Elk shows when he tells about his vision. The vision is related over 25 pages (BES 22-47), and it is not unlikely that students find it inaccessible because of its length and its symbolism which is very foreign to German culture. In this case, teachers should read Paul A. Olson's article "Black Elk Speaks as an Epic and Ritual Attempt to Reverse History." In it he has given a very detailed interpretation of the vision's Sioux symbolism.<sup>24</sup> In order to facilitate deeper understanding, teachers could try to put into context some aspects of the vision.<sup>25</sup> What is clear from Olson's article as well as from many examples in the text of *Black Elk Speaks* is that this vision was perceived by Black Elk as extremely important for the history of his people. In it he saw the powers of

the cardinal directions as well as of the earth and sky. He saw his nation centered around the tree of life which stands on the crossing of a red and a black road. He is told by the grandfathers how his nation shall walk on the bad black road but gain power and walk on the good red road again. Black Elk is shown "a day full of happiness" (BES 42) and he is told: "Behold this day, for it is yours to make" (BES 42).

When Neihardt interviewed Black Elk almost 60 years after he experienced this vision, he was still burdened with the responsibility his vision put on him. He defines his life by the vision that was given to him, and it is the reason why he feels that his life is worth telling. Thus, in his ability to hunt and to fight and even to travel abroad, he does not see personal achievement: "So also have many others done, and better than I" (BES 1). It is his vision that made his life special and which is his life's ultimate measure: "[My life] was the story of a mighty vision given to a man too weak to use it" (BES 2). However, Black Elk knows that in passing on the vision he keeps it alive.

There are hints to the meaning of the vision all through *Black Elk Speaks*. Asking students to find these instances or to provide them with examples which then can be discussed in groups or in the classroom is a valuable way of reaching an understanding of the meaning of a vision. There are several instances in the text which tell about how the vision is connected to power. When Black Elk is in a race against a member of his tribe to find out whose horse is faster, he thinks of his vision:

I thought about the white wing of the wind  
that the Second Grandfather of my vision  
gave me; and maybe that power went into  
my pony's legs. (BES 83)

Black Elk wins the race. More relevant examples are given in the context of the nation's survival. Thus Crazy Horse is protected during fights when he thinks about his vision (BES 85). Or, before a fight against the American cavalry, Black Elk pauses to rest a moment and to think of his vision: "It made me feel stronger, and it seemed that my people were all thunderbeings and that the soldiers would be rubbed out" (BES 110).



The reader also gets a strong idea that receiving a vision means an obligation towards the community. Thus, when Black Elk is insecure and therefore reluctant to share his vision with his people, he develops into a frightened person, feeling threatened by the thunderbeings (BES 159-161). It is an old medicine man who knows what has to be done: the vision, or parts of it, have to be performed. This seems quite an impressive way of dealing with the truth of this vision, which is, as Black Elk says, beyond words. In the ritual performance everybody learns about the vision and experiences it; many people take part and thus shared, it gains a completely new meaning and it has healing power. Black Elk explains:

After the horse dance was over, it seemed that I was above the ground and did not touch it when I walked. I felt very happy, for I felt that my people were all happier. Many crowded around me and said that they or their relatives who had been feeling sick were well again, and these gave me many gifts. Even the horses seemed to be healthier and happier after the dance (BES 175).

A while after the enactment of the vision Black Elk begins to heal people. But although he is thankful about the healing powers he received, his real understanding of his vision is that it was given to him so he could heal the whole nation and make it walk on the good red road: "The life of the people was in the hoop, and what are many little lives if the life of those lives be gone?" (BES 214). Because he feels that individual healing is not sufficient, he even crosses the Atlantic ocean to find out more about the Wasichus, so he might be able to use this knowledge for his people. Later on, he participates in the Ghost Dance for the same reason. Throughout his life, he feels this obligation towards his nation, and although personally successful, he knows his vision has not been fulfilled. So he knows that by passing on his vision, despite his fear of giving it away, he is doing the right thing:

I know I have given away my power when I have given away my vision and maybe I cannot live very long now. But I think I have done right to save the vision in this way,

even though I may die sooner because I did it; for I know the meaning of the vision is true and beautiful and good. (BES 206)

In instances like the ones I have selected, Black Elk himself explains a lot about the meaning of the vision. This is ultimately a great advantage over seemingly objective anthropological material in which someone from outside the culture attempts this explaining. Students can analyze the text of *Black Elk Speaks* and learn about the meaning of the vision through its impact on the events of his life. What they learn about it cannot be separated from what the text can teach about the meaning of community. It seems to be one of the great assets of Neihardt's text that, while admittedly, he edits extensively and partly reproduces stereotypes, he also renders the spoken word into a legible message that one can study in a classroom thousands of miles away from where it was first passed on 70 years ago.

Black Elk is the subject of the text, and a lot of his own very unique thinking and feeling, viewing and understanding has been preserved. This subject status should not be underestimated, because it allows the reader to identify with a Native American person through the barriers of time, space and culture. Through a prolonged reading of a text with a subject with which one can identify, one might enter a learning process that loosens the restraints one's own culture stresses.

Neihardt's text also provides an opportunity to analyze the way a member of the western culture is influenced by the paradigms of his time and thus reproduces stereotypes. He associates Black Elk with the image of the vanishing Indian. Yet because his intention is not only to romanticize but also to learn from Native society, one gets an image that is far more complex than the usual noble savage or vanishing Indian. Neihardt demonstrates a serious will to understand Black Elk and his culture and even indirectly challenges some Western assumptions, like the idea of manifest destiny. Most importantly, he acts as an intermediary between two very different cultures and makes available history from a new perspective. Neihardt's text, like other ethnographic work, is

enmeshed in a world of enduring and changing power inequalities, and it continues to be implicated. It enacts power relations. But its function within these relations is complex, often ambivalent, potentially counter-hegemonic.”<sup>26</sup>

All of this makes *Black Elk Speaks* not only a complex text, but also an extremely interesting one. It can teach both teachers and students about their own cultures while it illustrates important aspects of Native American life and religion.

### Notes

1. Berthold Hütten, et al. eds., *Green Line: Lehrerbuch* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlage, 1989), 151.
2. Ruth Arendt, et al. eds., *Red Line: Schülerbuch* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlage, 1987), 59, italics by author.
3. Hütten, 15.
4. My use of the term follows Peter Hulme's in *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean* (London, Methuen, 1986). Hulme attempts an analysis of the “colonial discourse, meaning by that term an ensemble of linguistically-based practices unified by their common deployment in the management of colonial relationships (...).” He goes on to explain: “Underlying the idea of colonial discourse (...) is the presumption that during the colonial period large parts of the non-European world were produced for Europe through a discourse that imbricated sets of questions and assumptions, methods of procedure and analysis, and kinds of writing and imagery, normally separated out into the discrete areas of military strategy, political order, social reform, imaginative literature, personal memoir and so on” (Hulme 2). Hulme himself refers in an endnote to this paragraph to Edward W. Said's “Introduction” to *Orientalism*. Said actually uses the term in a way similar to Hulme, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 3. My use of the term is informed by the way these two authors use it. I want to regard the writing that has been produced about Native Americans and their cultures as similar to this “colonial discourse” and to the discourse of Orientalism. It is relevant, however, to point out that I also agree with both authors when they underline that these discourses, which have a long tradition in the western imagination, are significant for the cultural and economical relations between colonizing and colonized countries today, after the end of formal colonialism.
5. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1978). Hartmut Lutz, “Indianer” und “Native Americans:” *Zur sozial- und literaturhistorischen Vermittlung eines Stereotyps* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1985).
6. James Clifford, “Introduction: Partial Truths,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, 1986), 1-26: 2.
7. Clifford, 2.
8. For a prolonged discussion, see James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Allegory” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*.
9. John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux: As told through John G. Neihardt (Flaming Rainbow)* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988, reprint from 1932). All further references to this work, abbreviated BES, will be included in the text. Students will find this edition and its reprints very helpful. It shows some photographs and one transcript which can be compared to the final text in Neihardt's book.

10. John G. Neihardt, “Letter to Black Elk. November 6th, 1930” in BES.
11. Raymond DeMallie, ed., *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 56. This collection of Enid Neihardt's shorthand scripts also provides us with further information about Black Elk's life and Oglala culture and is indispensable for a critical study of Neihardt's text.
12. For a description of the adoption ceremony see DeMallie, 36-38.
13. Berkhofer, 29-30.
14. Neihardt, “Letter,” 278.
15. Michael Staub, “(Re) Collecting the Past: Writing Native American Speech,” *American Quarterly* 43:3 (September 1991): 432.
16. DeMallie, 26.
17. Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18.
18. The story of the westward expansion through the Anglos' eyes still gets told in German English textbooks. One example is the adaptation of “Alone against Apaches” by Louis L'Amour in Arendt et al. The title alone tells it all.
19. I am always surprised to learn how many students of the humanities in their *Hauptstudium* do not know the difference between Religious Studies and Theology. Theology is the study of the Christian religion, done by people who understand themselves as Christians. Religious Studies are non-confessional. This discipline is the general study of religion, sometimes the study of dogma or of religious history, or a comparison of different religions' understanding of certain phenomena. What I am personally most interested in is the part of Religious Studies that acknowledges the role that religion plays in most people's lives and how it shapes their thinking about their community, their identity and their daily actions as well as their people's way in history.
20. For a discussion about the Native American understanding of religion (esp. in opposition to theology) see Weaver, esp. the introduction.
21. One vivid example that can be discussed with students is the bison hunt (BES 48-60).
22. DeMallie, 156-7.
23. Black Elk qtd. in DeMallie, 156.
24. For a detailed discussion of the vision and an explanation of its Sioux symbolism see Paul A. Olson, “Black Elk Speaks as Epic and Ritual Attempt to Reverse History,” in *Vision and Refuge: Essays on the Literature of the Great Plains*, ed. Virginia Faulkner and Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 3-37.
25. Maybe a creative approach could be made use of too. Students could be asked to paint images from the vision or to use its imagery in creative writing. Many teachers will probably think that a creative approach does not work in this age group and is at best a waste of time. To this I want to answer that creativity might lead us to understand more intuitively and thus may more adequately allow understanding of symbols of the vision. I would be rather reluctant, however, to encourage to enact aspects of the vision. After all, for the Lakota, this vision is holy and its enactment a religious ritual.
26. Clifford, “Introduction,” 9.

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# *A Native Person Teaches Native Studies to Non-Natives: The Challenge and Practice*

*Phil Bellfy*

At the university where I teach, there is one class that is required of all sophomores. Called "U.S. and the World," the course tries to present students with an overview of the last 224 years of "American" Art, Humanities, History, and Culture. Due to the wide scope of the class, the immense size of the course (about 3,000 students per term), the different backgrounds and disciplines of the students, and the exclusive use of graduate assistants to teach the course, it is an impossible and thankless task. Consequently, the course is almost always undergoing revision.

During a recent revision, the university decided that the course material should begin with the events of 1776. Due to this change, almost all reference to the continent's Native people (which was scant at best), was virtually eliminated. This was of some concern to the few Native faculty on campus. As Native people were essentially eliminated from the discussion of "America and the World," I decided to design a course that would specifically present a counter to the "America begins in 1776" neo-Euro-centric view of the United States.

After the sophomore students get the broad overview of America and the World, they are required to take a "second-tier" course offered by the same department (actually a "Center") which is much more narrowly focused. Students can take a course on the Popular Musics of Africa, The Arab World, Comedy and Cultural Survival, the Medieval World, etc. My course's "official" title is: *Area Studies and Multicultural Civilizations: The Americas: Native American Focus*.

Even with a title like that, I had to convince the Director of the Center that, given the main course's elimination of Native peoples, my "one-sided" approach to teaching about Native peoples was appropriate. My basic argument revolved around the fact that we in the Native community

were unsuccessful in convincing the Center to include a discussion of Native people in the course that reaches 6,000 students, let me present my "one-sided" view to the fifty students I would have in my classroom. I was successful in convincing the Director of the value to my approach to teaching Native studies to a group of students who had little (if any) exposure to Native American history and culture, and virtually no exposure to actual Native people. The result is that my course is the only course that can be taken to fulfill a university-wide requirement that deals exclusively with the continent's indigenous people and is readily identified that way by its designation in the catalog.

The goal of the course is to expose students to a very critical view of "America" that is decidedly outside (some may say "beyond the fringes of") the mainstream view of both "America" and Native Americans. This critical view is all wrapped up within concepts of cultural identity. I ask students to critically examine what it means to be a young adult, an undergraduate student at a large Midwest public university, an "American," and a participant in late 20<sup>th</sup> century capitalism. I even go so far as to ask them to examine what it means to be a human being in this highly technological and competitive society.

Instead of avoiding the "victim-of-the-week" approach to American history eschewed by the 3,000-students-a-term main course, I present to students a view of the world where we are almost all "victims" of one type or another. To be honest, I probably could not get away with using this approach if I was attempting to get students to look through the cultural lens of almost any other minority except that of Native people. Most Americans have a very distorted but in this case thankfully romantic view of American Indians; I'm afraid that given the prejudice against African Americans, trying to use the critical cultural lens

of the slave experience, for example, would be far less acceptable to students. Because student's exposure to Native people is so minimal, I believe students are somewhat fascinated by the idea that a real Indian is teaching a course which deals exclusively with Native people. And it is indeed a unique experience; I explain to my students the odds against this happening again in their academic careers is virtually nil (there are only five [out of 2,000] Native faculty trained in Native Studies areas on campus).

To work, this highly critical "indigenous perspective" approach has to be based on a challenge to virtually everything students believe in after their 20 years of "schooling" as members of this (dominant) society. This is the message of the first day of class and it remains as the dominant theme of the course.

In order to critically examine our culture through an indigenous lens, students' core beliefs must first be challenged. I begin by attacking notions of instinctual human behavior (I claim there are none); I then try to dispel the notion that there are "universally proscribed" standards of human behavior. I ask students to provide me with lists of "instincts" and universal "taboos," then I knock them down.

A presumed "survival instinct" is countered by the example of those who commit suicide, the maternal instinct by the example of those mothers who abandon their babies, the instinct to reproduce by those who choose to remain childless; the taboo against murder is countered by the seeming desirability of war, the glorification of war heroes, and state executions of certain criminals. Rape, theft, incest, etc., can all be shown to be based on cultural standards—not on any instinctual imperatives—which can be changed. All of these challenges are designed to create in students' minds a glimmer of doubt concerning what they almost certainly believe to be the nearly immutable quality and historic inevitability of human behavior in general and specifically the society in which we live. My goal here is simple: human beings are social creatures who create societies that are not the result of instinctual or social Darwinian forces but, instead, are the result of the cultural choices people make

based on their experience and environment. Using the analogy of physical evolution, every culture is the result of that culture adapting to its environment and experience and achieving optimal results—there is no ultimate "civilized" state we are all struggling to attain, and only the "fittest" societies survive.

So, here we arrive at a discussion of "culture;" and through our previous discussion, we are prepared to define cultures and create a lens with which we may view those which differ from our own. I do this by comparing oral, print, and electronic cultures; specifically, we explore truth, power, knowledge, and the role of the individual in these three cultural types. Within this context, I define culture as "that body of knowledge, passed from one generation to the next, necessary to sustain and maintain the society." Generally, when people talk about culture, they are almost always talking about the knowledge aspects of a society. But it is my argument that the method of transmission is also very important to the culture of any given society. The following chart gives a simplified summary of these cultures, with an emphasis on the storage and transmission of cultural knowledge as I present it.

	ORAL	PRINT	ELECTRONIC
TRUTH	Absolute	Conditional	Irrelevant
POWER	Diffuse	Concentrated	Highly concentrated
KNOW-LEDGE IS AVAILABLE TO...	All members of society	Those who can read	Those with access to the technology
ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY	Essential to optimal functioning	To serve the powerful	To consume and conform

Figure One: Social Factors Under Three Types of Culture

My "models" for the three cultural types are: examples from Indigenous cultures represent the Oral cultural types; late 19<sup>th</sup>, early 20<sup>th</sup> century neo-European cultures represent Print cultures; the examples of Electronic culture are mainly conjecture. Of course, there is a considerable amount of overlap from one cultural type to the next. For example, I am quick to explain that the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century neo-European



cultures seem to be moving out of a print culture and into one which is more electronically based. Europe, as it emerged from the Dark Ages, may be used as a model that shows the interface between Oral and Print societies.

While we discuss such issues as instinct, social evolution, cultural construction and transmission, conformity, consumerism, etc., we are reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Although written over fifty years ago, Bradbury was describing a society which is moving out of the print culture into the electronic culture of the future as he envisioned it. The Oral culture part of the *Fahrenheit 451* is represented by the "hobo" outcasts inhabiting the wild areas outside the cities, who (with the aid of drugs) memorize important cultural material and pass it from generation to generation, orally. This is where we finally confront our own society through the cultural lens of an indigenous oral culture. Furthermore, the *Fahrenheit 451* society of the future mirrors our own in many important respects. Bradbury presents a society moving out of Print into Electronic dominance, yet one with an Oral culture component, much like our own society on the cusp of the new millenium. The *Fahrenheit 451* society is obsessed with consumerism, enchanted by TV, kept busy through a pursuit of "being happy" via sports and entertainment, paralyzed by a fear of non-conformity, and ruled by an elite that maintains power through its control of technology. Sound familiar?

Students then begin their reading of *Native American Testimony*, a "Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present" compiled by Peter Nabokov. As the rest of the course is essentially chronological, Nabokov's book is divided into sections, read as an introduction to the classroom discussion over the course of the entire term. For example, as we move out of defining our terms (instinct, culture, etc.) and into a discussion of pre-contact Europe and the contact era, the students read the first two chapters of *Native American Testimony* which relate indigenous "Premonitions and Prophecies" and "Face to Face" encounters.

While students begin to read Nabokov, the classroom discussion revolves around the state of Europe and the "New World" before contact.

Here I present material from *The Malleus Maleficarum* and *A World Lit Only by Fire*, books which help explain the mind set of the Europeans as Columbus sets out to sail to the "Indies." Much is made of the witch-hunts and the Devil imagery that accompanied this period of European history and how such imagery affected Europeans' view of indigenous people. Comparisons with *Fahrenheit 451* are also valuable here.

I also spend considerable time discussing the state of the New World in 1492, especially the state of New World "Civilization" typified by Tenochtitlan and the hygiene and health of most New World indigenous people compared to the squalid conditions of Columbus' Europe. We do not ignore such issues as the human sacrifice of the Aztecs, but, instead, compare it to the burning of witches in Europe. Much time is also spent on the creation of those images we associate with savages, pagans, heathens, and barbarians. We also explore the connotations of "civilized" and "uncivilized" and what does it mean when we apply such labels to societies.

Once all this terminology is inspected and dissected, we are prepared for Columbus' trip to this hemisphere. In the past I used Tzvetan Todorov's *Conquest of America* or Jack Weatherford's *Indian Givers*, but I now have my students read Jerry Mander's *In the Absence of the Sacred*. Mander's book, subtitled: "The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations," serves a dual purpose (as the subtitle suggests). Mander's anti-technology stance is a shock to most students and it challenges them to consider the role of technology in their own lives. Mander then forces students to see how other people—the non-technological people that Mander calls "Indians"—live their lives.

Mander presents this comparison in five-page "Table of Inherent Differences" in the middle of the book. Here we can see side-by-side comparisons like nuclear versus extended families, competition versus cooperation, economic growth versus steady-state economics, saving versus sharing, etc. Areas of Economics, Politics and Power, Sociocultural Arrangements and Demographics, Relation to Environment, Architecture, and Religion and Philosophy are all examined

through this side-by-side comparison. The result is a stark contrast between the highly technological, stressful world of the student and the relatively relaxed world of non-technological peoples. We use Mander's book to discuss the role of monotheistic religion and its divinely-mandated assault of the environment as it compares to the "Sacred" nature of indigenous societies' view of the natural world. I get into a lot of trouble here as religion is a highly personal matter, so I go to great pains to pry the personal nature of religion away from its social consequences. This is not always easy, and many students refuse to admit that religion is anything but internal and has no consequences in the real world. Mander's anti-technology stance is also dismissed out of hand by many students who have whole-heartedly accepted TV into their lives with results that border on the religious for them.

During the reading of Mander's book, the classroom discussion revolves around a presentation of the "Culture Areas" of indigenous America (U.S and Canada), concentrating on pre-contact social structures and reminding students, through the discussion, that these people are still extant and functioning. I use the designations from the *Atlas of the North American Indian* by Carl Waldman and Molly Braun. In this section of the class, I sometimes have to restrict our discussion to fewer areas than the Atlas presents, but at a minimum, I always discuss the Southeast, the Southwest, the Great Plains, and the Northeast Woodlands. These areas allow us to discuss most major issues in U.S. history (the Revolution, the War of 1812, Removal, the "Taming of the West," Manifest Destiny, etc.), and many important Native historical figures (Sequoyah, Osceola, Tecumseh, Pontiac, Geronimo, Brant, Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, etc.). Part of the emphasis is that (returning to culture) societies socially adapt to their environment, and the tremendous diversity of the environment leads to a tremendous diversity of peoples and cultures—i.e. there is no monolithic "Indian" out there.

This "Culture Area" form of classroom discussion, while very helpful in presenting the diversity of Indigenous people, creates one insurmountable problem—how to bring students

into the discussion when the material is almost always completely new to them. I try to water down the dryness of dull classroom lecture by introducing as much visual aid as possible and probing students to uncover what they do know about Native people and American history (a lot, albeit much of it distorted). This period of the class also gives us time to step back from the pointedly controversial to the decidedly non-controversial; from a critical examination of dominant Christian religions to a discussion of the Hopi world-view, for example.

This "Culture Area" approach also has the problem of stepping outside of the chronological presentation of class materials. For example, while beginning in the pre-contact era, the areas are each discussed in a more modern context as well, bringing in Custer and Crazy Horse before we discussed the Puritans. While some students find it hard to fully comprehend, this approach does allow for a discussion of the non-linear world-view of many indigenous people, where "history" is not so much a relic of the past as it is a living part of the present and a guide to the future.

But, after our Culture Area discussions, return to chronology we do—Columbus, Cortez, Cartier, and on to the Puritans. Here we spend a considerable amount of time discussing the world-view and culture of the Puritans and use that as a counter to the Puritans' view of Native People, resulting in the notion of "Savagism."

His voyages rang in a dark era for America's indigenous peoples... Christopher Columbus (1451-1506), the first of the European explorers, conquistadores, and missionaries, set foot on the shores of the "New World" on October 12, 1492.



Savagism, as an invention of the Puritan worldview, is still very much a part of our own North American culture and an integral part of who we believe "Americans" are. Through concepts of Savagism, indigenous people are described as: culturally and morally deficient (uncivilized), emotional, inherently inferior, immorally sensuous, lazy and indolent, untrustworthy in groups, and ultimately part of a vanishing race. These are, of course, purely cultural constructs, resulting in the invention of the "Indian" (we can and do trace this construct back to the notions of the *Malleus Maleficarum* and the Dark Ages).

This invented Indian image serves a dual purpose for our early English forebears—a process whereby they can also invent themselves, as "Americans." Consequently—using the mirror image of the Indian—an American can be defined as well: Americans are civilized, rational, superior, moral, hardworking, honest people. Besides, it's been ordained by God! And the proof is in their decline and our expansion—we are destined to become the dominant race of the continent. Of course, history has shown us that this last element of Savagism has come true (native people make up only one percent of the U.S. population), so, therefore, we must believe that all the other elements of savagism must be true as well. I do admit to the challenge of reversing such a pervasive view of the qualities of Indians and Americans that seem to be indelibly etched in our

collective consciousness (and, subsequently, in our history as well).

Of course, what I am asking students to do here is abandon the popular notions of what an "Indian" is. Once I point out to them that Native people were and are quite "civilized" (perhaps, even more so when the European standards are applied fairly), hardworking, rational, moral, people, they must then begin to question the invention of the "American" as well. This is tough; but if I can convince them that the Indian is an invention, then they must accept that the American is an invention as well.

Armed with this newly-constructed cultural lens, students are then presented with the possibility that much of what they learned about Indians (and other minorities), and about themselves can, and should, be questioned. This questioning is further explored through the viewing of the film *Drums Along the Mohawk* which is purported to be about our War of Independence from the British. But with the exception of the black-patched Cornwall, the enemy of choice is the "dusky savage." Of course, staying true to stereotype, there is Blueback, a Noble Savage of biblical proportion who may indeed be, as is stated, "A Better Christian" than most of the settlers.

With the exception of a mid-movie monologue on the horrors of war, the movie is hopelessly predictable, with all the elements of Savagism (and "Americanism") unapologetically manifested right up to the final scene where we see not only the settlers, but the Black servant and Blueback shedding a tear as the new "American" flag is raised over the fort only too recently besieged by the dark and savage hordes. This movie and discussion helps dispel the myths which surround the founding of the United States and the role that native people played in those colonial days.

The students are reading *Tracks* by the Ojibway writer Louise Erdrich during this discussion. *Tracks* is valuable for many reasons. First the chapters are alternately narrated by two distinct characters. Set in the Ojibway country of the Old Northwest, the odd chapters (out of nine) are narrated by Nanapush, a traditional male elder



Jacques Cartier (1491-1557) was a French explorer who led expeditions to the American Northeast where he and his men lived among the Hurons for some time.

of the tribe; the even chapters by Pauline, a young, mixed-blood Native woman who rejects her Native culture and desires to "be wholly white" like her grandfather. This alternating of narrators presents to the readers a highly contrasting view of events on the reservation where they both live, as lives on the reserve are being destroyed by greed, land grabs, jealousy, taxation, and the erosion of the communal and spiritual bonds that define (or defined) life on the reserve.

Nanapush and Pauline give us contrasting views on religion (he's traditional, she's Catholic), politics (he's cautious and skeptical, she's cold and calculating), love relationships (his is warm and caring, hers is loveless sex), human relations (his are compassionate and cooperative, hers are manipulative and selfish); he knows who he is, she's searching; he's comfortable with his identity, she rejects her identity and is forced to fashion a new one. The contrasts are extremely useful as I try to get students to question their own ways of knowing (and knowing who they are).

Pauline is a young woman, probably the same age as most of the students, who is struggling with her identity—a situation which I suggest is similar to what many if not most students are also struggling with. (A re-discussion of identity and conformity exemplified by *Fahrenheit 451*'s Clarisse is useful here as well). By having Pauline step outside of her culture while searching for a new identity within the dominant culture, Erdrich gives her readers the challenge of looking at their own cultural identity; and by critically examining the dominant society through the eyes of a Native woman, the poor picture which results seems to be more benign and less strident than the in-your-face style of other social critics, like Mander, for example.

*Tracks* also gives us the opportunity to discuss the decline in Native land holdings, from the usurpations in colonial New England and the illegal Removals of the southeast, to the forced reservation life and Dawes Act losses at the turn of the last century. (It is no coincidence that *Tracks* begins as the twenty-five year "tax-free" period proscribed by the Dawes Act expires.) It is also very useful to discuss the boarding school experience of Native people as part of this history

of U.S. government's intrusion into the lives of Native people who were not yet "granted" U.S. citizenship. As always, this gives rise to discussions of cultural identity, and our (U.S.) centuries-long insistence that other peoples be like us (US) and our willingness to commit genocide when more "benign" methods fail.

After *Tracks*, students read another novel by a Native woman, *Ceremony*, by Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo). I have colleagues question my use of such a complex novel in a non-English, gen-ed, undergraduate class, but after overcoming this early trepidation, I have found that students are generally quite capable of reading and fully understanding this complex book. After all, it's really just another story of drunken war vets!

Once again, the serious purpose of *Ceremony* is another exploration of cultural identity, and, once again, through the struggles of a young person—this time the "half-breed" Tayo. Tayo is horribly lost, suffering through a mysterious emotional disease which threatens his will to live. This disease is brought about by the loss of Tayo's full-blood cousin, Rocky, in the war. Tayo's problems brought on by Rocky's death are exacerbated by Tayo's belief that his cursing of the rain in the Pacific is the reason his reservation is undergoing a severe drought now that the war is over.

The "ceremony" that Tayo undergoes to "cure" his sickness—along with its obvious and essential spiritual component—contains the very real search for his uncle's lost cattle, mixed-breed cattle that have gone missing. As Tayo completes the ceremony suggested by the medicine man, Betonie (who is also a mixed-blood), he must also find the cattle and bring them back to the reservation. The comparison of Tayo and his cultural loss, to the lost cattle is almost too simple an explanation and does not begin to do justice to the complexity of this novel, but it is these simple elements that I suggest my students explore as they read this book.

The complexity comes from Silko's use of non-linear time as her vehicle for narration. Students are again made aware of the differences in the culture of the dominant society typified by the



strict chronological order of most novels as it compares to the essential mixing of the past, present, and future of *Ceremony*. But, leaving the book's complex chronology aside, within our classroom discussion we return to the chronological model.

We move along, past the pre-Depression world of *Tracks*, and into the Depression-era Indian New Deal, with its minor reversal of Dawes Act land-losses, and the implementation of I.R.A. tribal governments as traditional governments are displaced. The book itself gives rise to discussions of war generally and the conduct of the both Allies and Axis powers in their conduct of the war. With knowing nods to Mander, we can discuss the technology of war and the use of uranium mined on Native land, mined by Native miners. *Ceremony* brings these nuclear issues full into the face of its readers.

As is the case with *Tracks*, *Ceremony* also forces the reader to confront the issue of cultural identity through the use of young, struggling characters. Both books also do not shy away from other controversial issues that confront young people today—greed, sex, alcohol, conformity, racism, religion, spirituality, consumerism, etc. The result is that together these books give students a critical portrait of the dominant society as seen through the eyes of very sympathetic young characters in a way that is not personally threatening.

As we finish with Silko's book and are prepared to move on, I leave my students with this one last notion to ponder. If you take the book's title in a very literal sense—it is not *The Ceremony* or *A Ceremony*, but simply *Ceremony*—I suggest to my students that the book itself is a Ceremony, and through their reading of it, they have accompanied Tayo on his healing quest, and they too may be “cured” of their doubts and troubles, they too may find their place in the world through a return to tradition and engendering a sense of social purpose in their lives. What that tradition and that social purpose may be is, of course, not for me to say, but my simple suggestion that a ceremonial healing process is available to all seems to be of some interest to students, even if it is something as simple as reading a book.

*Ceremony* gives us the opportunity to discuss many issues surrounding the Second World War (and war in general), and as the book makes very clear, the racism of U.S. society. For example, we discuss Dillon Myer's role both in the internment of the Japanese during the war, and the “Relocation” of Native people after the war. These issues lead us to a discussion of Termination, the Indian Claims Commission, and deep into the rise of the Voting and Civil Rights movements, the Black Panthers, and the American Indian Movement. Discussions of Vietnam and the Democratic Convention of 1968, the deaths of students at Mississippi State and Kent State are also considered, with a strong emphasis on the role of students in social change movements around the world, especially during the revolutionary 1960s. All of this is once again designed to reinforce the notion that we (however you define who that “we” might be) do not have to live the way we are living now. There is nothing immutable about human societies; they are living, changing, evolving, devolving, and perhaps even dying as we speak. And we are the agents of that change, and often the agents of that change are young people, who live lives that are much the same as the lives of the students sitting in this classroom right now. It is a powerful message;



In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) took over and held for weeks the town of Wounded Knee in an attempt to dramatize Indian grievances.

When you can point out that students died for the cause of voting rights, or civil rights, that people died fighting for the right to form unions, that Black Panthers and AIM people died defending the rights of all Americans, and that tens of thousands of young American men—and

millions of Vietnamese—died in the name of U.S. imperialism, students pay attention.

Using the backdrop of the '60s, we can then discuss a myriad of contemporary issues: treaty rights, fishing rights, Alcatraz, the AIM take-over of the BIA building in Washington, Wounded Knee (both I and II). We spend a considerable amount of time on the situation on Pine Ridge, both historically and its more contemporary problems—the terror of the '70s and the shoot-out at the Jumping Bull Compound. Here we view the movie incident at Oglala, a documentary on the Jumping Bull incident and Leonard Peltier's incarceration.

While this discussion is taking place in the classroom, students are reading *Neither Wolf nor Dog* by Kent Nerburn. Nerburn's book is subtitled "On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder." Nerburn himself recognizes the danger in yet another book by a writer who (in his own words): "claims to have met some wisdom-bearing elder who has unaccountably decided to share his or her innermost cultural secrets and teachings." He admits that anyone who would write such a book is the "most pernicious breed of white writer," and that he is "neither a white exploiter...nor a blue-eyed wannabe" (3). But the book, nonetheless, is an account of wisdom from an "Indian" elder told by a white guy—and told very well, I might add. Students almost universally describe this book as the course's best (maybe the best book, period).

*Neither Wolf nor Dog* derives its value from that cultural tension between the white writer and his Native "informant." Its purpose mirrors the purpose of this entire class: how to look at a culture through the eyes of an outsider. The book, while masterly presenting the Native world-view, is also (not surprisingly) a serious critique of the world inhabited by the dominant society—yet told with good humor and genuine honesty. Its value lies in the fact that this is a white man telling the story of an Native elder—filtering the words and feelings of a Native man through the ears and experience of a non-Native—to a (most likely) white audience. This is why it works so well.

I used to have my students read a series of essays by Ward Churchill, a fellow Native and

teacher I admire greatly. But Ward Churchill's polemical style had the tendency to turn students off (*From a Native Son* would work beautifully for graduate students, but it's a bit too much for an introductory undergraduate course). Kent Nerburn's book, on the other hand, leads us to discuss many of the same issues that Ward Churchill clearly lays out in his essays: genocide (cultural and murderous), cultural stereotyping, cultural denigration through the use of Indian imagery in sports, the expropriation of indigenous spirituality through religious hucksterism, etc.

In class we can discuss these issues in the same spirit as Nerburn's book—in a non-threatening atmosphere. By the time we get to a discussion of boarding schools, the legal negation of Native spirituality (and the recent lifting of the ban on its practice), the denial of Native (and other minority) rights, the continual loss of Native land (and the destruction of the environment), and the cultural genocide faced by Native people everyday of their lives, students have had their eyes opened to the injustices of the society in which they live. And, as it is made very clear, these are not injustices foisted upon only Native people.

We live in a society of winners and losers—it is designed that way, and it cannot function in any other way. We cannot institute Affirmative Action programs without stepping on the "rights" of some people; we cannot abandon Affirmative Action programs without stepping on the rights of some others. We cannot recognize Native treaty fishing rights without affecting the sports fishers. We cannot ask University of Illinois fans to abandon their ludicrous and demeaning "mascot" because it denigrates the tradition and spirituality of Native people without "ruffling the feathers" of those committed to the "tradition" of dressing up like "Indians" on Saturday afternoon and uttering inane "war whoops" while chopping tomahawks in the air.

Winners and losers. As long as we have a society which requires discrimination as a requirement of its normal function, we will find people to discriminate against. Maybe it's African-Americans, maybe it's Chicanos/Chicanas, maybe it's women, maybe it's homosexuals, maybe it's Irish, maybe it's Jews, maybe it's Arabs, maybe it's labor

leaders, maybe it's Socialists, maybe it's Catholics, but, unfortunately, always it is the Indians.

And just maybe it's students and maybe it's young people and maybe it's occasionally white men of west European origin; but if we live in a society which requires that we discriminate against somebody, discriminate we will—and eventually we will get to you, whoever you are.

The experience of Native people serves as that mirror we all can look into to see ourselves. The five-hundred history of Native people is a painful experience—and painful not only to those Indians who have suffered it. When shown that the experience suffered by Native people is an experience that has been visited upon almost everybody in some degree, students begin to see the society in which they live as not the utopia they have been forced to accept unthinkingly for the first twenty years of their lives, but a dystopia—a dystopia on its way to a monstrous *Fahrenheit 451* world.

In this course, we trace the origins of this society from its roots in Columbus' Europe, through the ravages of epidemic disease, through the genocide of the colonial period, through the barbarism of Removal, through the injustices of the "Indian Wars" of western expansion, through the denial of treaty rights and the continual loss of land, through the efforts of "civilization" and its deliberate cultural genocide, through the destruction of tribal relations and the "Indian New Deal," through the assimilationist Relocation and Termination schemes, through its undeclared war on Indian people abroad and on the American Indian Movement at home, and through its continued incarceration of Leonard Peltier, the society is exposed for what it truly is and how it has been cruelly constructed. And when finally thus exposed, this society literally begs for change. And students are up to it—just as they have been up to it for generations. It is my faint hope that in some small way, my course—a view of society through Indian eyes—may provide at least a few

students with the knowledge and insight they need to take that next step, to question the myths of our society, to bring its dark history into the light, and begin the task of changing this society into a place that is better for everyone—Native and non-Native, men and women, young and old, rich and poor. We can change, we are human beings, we live in societies, all of us, together. We don't have to live like this.

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## Lesson Plan: Native Americans—Stereotypes and Reality

This lesson plan was compiled by participants of the Teacher Training Seminar *Media and Teaching English as a Foreign Language* at the Center for U.S.-Studies in Wittenberg from March 20 – 22, 2000.

**Grade:** This lesson plan is suitable for grades 8 – 11;

**Rationale:** To develop an understanding of the life and the culture of contemporary Native Americans and to correct stereotypes about Native Americans;

**Time:** 3 lessons á 45 min.

**Materials:** cartoon or picture and/or story and/or video tape, fact sheet

### Lesson 1:

1. Cartoon or story as introduction
- 1.1. Cartoon

warming up/getting students to talk

**Assignment:** Look at the cartoon/picture, what comes to your mind? Describe the picture

The picture should be a rather stereotypical image of a Native American, e.g. on a horse, with a headdress, in front of a teepee, etc.

**Assignment:** Find a suitable caption for the cartoon/picture.

- 1.3. Talking about traditions/revision

**Assignment:** What do you know/remember about the traditional way of life of the Native Americans?

Expected answers/notes on board (left column):

- lived together in tribes
- lived on tribal land
- moved around from place to place
- older ones taught younger ones
- lived on hunting, gathering, fishing
- battles and wars with other tribes
- clichés: peace pipe, medicine man, war dance
- strong beliefs in their gods
- close relationship to nature, etc.

2. Story “An Interesting Story from a Navajo”
- 2.1. Listening only
- 2.2. Reading

**Assignment:** What is the story about? Who is confronting who in the story? What is the underlying message of the story?

Expected answers:

A number of issues can be raised here, e.g.:

- Navajos as inhabitants of a region that looks like the surface of the moon (deserted, unfertile, etc.);
- NASA (technology) and Native American (nature) confront each other—two worlds meet;
- humor used to describe the colonialization of Native Americans by Europeans/Euro-Americans;

**Assignment:** underline the key sentence and give reasons for your choice

Expected answer: last sentence (see text)

**Assignment/speculation** (note on board/right column): What do you think life is like today?

Expected answers:

- reservations
- families, poverty
- ordinary jobs/badly paid
- school



Weaving Navajo Woman



- relationship to their traditions
- problems with alcohol and drugs

### Lesson 3

Choose topics for research/suggestions:

- education
- tradition
- economy
- environment

**Homework/assignment:** Collect all information about the following topics. Use the local library, reference books, media, or the internet.

### Lesson 2

#### 1. Brainstorming

**Assignment:** What do you know about the Navajos (or some other tribe)?

If brainstorming does not provide enough information use the worksheet for reading.

- Video on Native Americans<sup>1</sup> ("Navajos")
1. Watch a video on Native Americans (about 30 min)

**Assignment:** Contemporary life (see worksheet): Add as much information from the video presentation as possible and put results on board.

#### 1. Organizing group work

**Assignment:** Use your own material and the material you get from the teacher and search for information to the fixed topics:

- education
- tradition
- economy
- environment

#### 2. Group Work

#### 3. Presentation of Results

After your research, present the results to the class (poster, transparency, flip chart)

### Notes

1. English teachers in Germany may rent videos in English from the

Video Library – Amerikazentrum Hamburg e.V.  
Rothenbaumchaussee 15  
20148 Hamburg

Fax: 040/44 80 96 98

[www.amerikazentrum.de](http://www.amerikazentrum.de)

The Amerikazentrum has a wide range of videos on different topics of American history, culture and traditions.

### *An Interesting Story from a Navajo*

About 1966 or so, a NASA team doing work for the Apollo moon mission took the astronauts near Tuba City. There the terrain of the Navajo Reservation looks very much like the lunar surface. Among all the trucks and large vehicles were two large figures that were dressed in full lunar spacesuits.

Nearby a Navajo sheep herder and his son were watching the strange creatures walk about, occasionally being tended by other NASA personnel. The two Navajo people were noticed and approached by the NASA personnel. Since the man did not know English, his son asked for him who the strange creatures were. The NASA people told them that they were just men that were getting ready to go to the moon. The man became very excited and asked if he could send a message to the moon with the astronauts.

The NASA personnel thought this was a great idea so they rustled up a tape recorder. After the man gave them his message, they asked his son to translate. His son would not.

Later, they tried a few more people on the reservation to translate and every person they asked would chuckle and then refuse to translate. Finally, with cash in hand someone translated the message,

"Watch out for these guys, they come to take your land."

(Compiled by Glenn Welker, for "The People")

## *Fact Sheet: The Navajos*

- today, the Navajos number about 225,000 people — the second largest Native American tribe in the United States. Most of them live on the Navajo-Reservation of 64,000 square km in the corner area of Utah, New Mexico and Arizona
- originally 4, there are more than 75 distinct clans now
- the Navajo Nation is governed by the Navajo Tribal Council

### History

- settled in the Southwest between 900 and 1200 AD;
- were greatly influenced by the Pueblo Indians with whom they came into contact;
- were traditionally nomadic; lived in hogans in summer and earth-covered lodges in winter;
- In the 17<sup>th</sup> century they lived in the area between San Juan River and Little Colorado River in Northeast Arizona but also spread beyond that area;
- After the occupation of New Mexico by the Americans (ca. 1846), the Navajo resisted this domination;
- 1863 U.S. government sent Kit Carson to subdue them, resulting in the destruction of herds and crops and the imprisonment of many Navajos at Fort Sumner (“the Long Walk,” during which about 200 people died of starvation and cruel treatment) for four years, 1864-1868;
- Treaty of 1868 allowed the Navajos to return a 3.5 million acre reservation in the corner of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah; there were about 9,000 Navajo left;
- irrigation projects by the federal government to increase agriculture in the 1930s.

### Culture and Contemporary Life

- Navajos call themselves “Dineh”—“the people”
- Navajo language is an Apachean language of the Athabaskan family since they are related to the Apaches (the language was used to create cryptographic codes during World War II)
- live in extended kinship groups, inheritance is still through the mother’s line;
- farming (corn, beans), hunting (antelopes, deer) and after the introduction of sheep in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, sheepherding superseded farming and hunting
- today also lumbering, mining (coal, gas minerals), metalworking, weaving, pottery
- The tribe owns enterprises and runs schools, the Navajo Community College, and newspapers
- Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, Antelope Canyon Park and Four Corners Monument are tribal parks operated by the Navajo Tribal Council

(compiled with the help of [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com), [www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com) and other, private sources)



*The Left and the Right Mittens, two rock formations at the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park in New Mexico*



*A Navajo tour guide at the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park*

## Further Readings on Native Americans

The number of books on Native Americans in print is astounding. If one were to search one of the online book sellers for "Indians," tens of thousands of books titles would appear. The range of topics within this field is also rather astonishing. Some works are quite general and suitable more for a coffee table and perusal by younger readers while others are thick scholarly works written for academics with an already extensive background in Native American history and culture. While popular picture books and scholarly tomes each have their purpose, for the general reader who is interested in depth yet does not want to be overwhelmed by information and theory, works that range in the middle serve better. The following bibliographic essay will attempt to pave a middle road between the two ends of the spectrum.

For an overview of Native American history, and a starting point for further research, one of the general textbooks is in order. There are a number of general, chronologically-organized texts that cover the entirety of Native American history, from the earliest archaeological records to the present. Somewhat outdated, though still a good introduction is *The American Indian* by Arrell Morgan Gibson, (New York: D. C. Heath & Co, 1981). James Wilson's *The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America* (London: Picador, 1998), is a chronological appraisal of Native American history after the arrival of Europeans, focusing primarily on the United States. Though not a narrative history, *Native American History: A Chronology of A Culture's Vast Achievements and Their Links to World Events* (New York: Ballantine, 1996), makes a good reference work. Tackling Native American history and world history on a year-by-year basis, this work is surprisingly good reading.

Two classic works on Native American history are *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1991, reprint) and Vine Deloria, Jr.'s *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988, reprint). Each is a self-consciously political text that seeks

to outline the atrocities committed by European-Americans in their dealings with Native peoples in the Americas. While the works should be read in conjunction with less political texts, they are a necessary part of Native American historiography.

Native American religion is an often-studied topic among beginning enthusiasts of Native American culture and history. Probably the most-requested and best-selling works on the subject is John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks*, (University of Nebraska Press, 1988) which traces the life of the Lakota medicine man through interviews with the author. Another, sometimes overlooked work is *The Fourth World of the Hopis: The Epic Story of the Hopi Indians As Preserved in Their Legends and Traditions* by Harold Courlander, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), which is a nice collection of traditional stories of this southwestern tribe with a good introduction to Hopi culture and religion.

Collections of traditional stories are often good places to start for an introduction to Native culture and religion. *American Indian Myths and Legends*, edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), is a wonderful general collection of stories from a variety of Indian tribes. Erdoes and Ortiz grouped the stories topically, rather than by tribe, which makes a comparison of the various philosophies illustrated in the stories apparent. *The Mythology of Native North America*, by David Adams Leeming and Jake Page (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), is, like the previous work, a collection of traditional stories.

Much has been written on the Native Americans in the colonial era in American history. Two good introductory texts that use a comparative approach to the topic of inter-ethnic relations are Gary B. Nash's *Red, White and Black: the Peoples of Early North America* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1997, revised edition) and Wesley Frank Craven's *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth Century Virginian* (1971). Most everything written by James Axtell is a good choice for easy to

understand, yet insightful thoughts on Indians in colonial America on the Atlantic coast. *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1985), and *The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) are both essentially collections of articles that examine Indian culture and cross-cultural exchange. Also a good introduction to this era is *The Invasion of America : Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* by Francis Jennings (New York: W W Norton & Co, 1976).

It is unfortunate that the Native American voice is seldom heard in history texts. There are a few works that have collected various speeches, writings and other documents that come from Native peoples. *The World Turned Upside Down: Indian Voices from Early America*, edited by Colin G. Calloway (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) is one of the better ones.

Native Americans have a long tradition of being story-tellers. In recent years, many Native authors have begun to write for the national marketplace. Two of the most popular Indian authors are the Laguna author Leslie Marmon Silko and the Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday. Both of these prize-winning writers blend Native thoughts, culture and themes in writings that are accessible for non-Indians and, furthermore, help to teach the non-Native about Native culture and life. Silko's most recent work is *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit : Essays on Native American Life Today* (Touchstone Books, 1997) though both *Storyteller* (Arcade Books, 1989) and *Ceremony* (Penguin Books, 1988) won national book awards. Momaday focuses on Kiowa traditions and his works are greatly influenced by oral tradition. *House Made of Dawn* (Harper Collins, 1999), his most recent work, and *The Man Made of Words : Essays, Stories, Passages*, (Griffin Trade Paperback, 1998) exemplify Momaday's story-telling technique. His breakthrough work, and some would say still his best work, was *Way to Rainy Mountain* (University of New Mexico Press, 1977). The importance of *Way to Rainy Mountain* is illustrated by *Approaches to Teaching Momaday's the Way to Rainy Mountain*, *Approaches to Teaching World Literature*, No. 17, edited by Kenneth M. Roemer (Modern Language Association of America, 1988).

In the scholarly tradition, collected essays bring together the best shorter works into one title. Many collections of essays are out on the book market. One excellent essay collection covering the early period in Native American history that deals with contact and acculturation is Peter Mancall and James Hart Merrell's *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850* (New York: Routledge, 2000). This anthology of articles covers a wide gamut of topics from contact through 1850. Of less general, but more specific interest are the articles found in Troy R. Johnson's *Contemporary Native American Political Issues* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999) and Duane Champagne's *Contemporary Native American Cultural Issues* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999). For those interested in what Native Americans themselves think are the most important issues in the present day, those two works are good choices. *The American Indian, Past and Present*, edited by Roger Nichols, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1999, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition), returns to a style of work that is more easily accessible for the more general reader. Peter Nabakov's *Native American Testimony* (New York: Penguin, 1991), is likewise a collection of more general articles. One work often used in Native American history classes is *Major Problems in American Indian History*, edited by Albert Hurtado and Peter Iverson (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1994). Most of the essays in this work examine general topics and are written in an accessible fashion. However, these articles are usually only excerpts from previously published materials. Two of the strengths of the work though is its topical and chronological organization and the inclusion of primary documents, which are again excerpts, from both Native and European perspectives.

The list of works on Native American history, culture, religion, literature and archaeology is long and varied. What is listed here is but a small section of the Native American bookshelf. Others would find that I have left out some of their favorites. I have also neglected works about specific tribes since the list of these books is, again, very long. Hopefully some of those works listed here will lead to the further exploration of Native American culture.



## Internet Resources

A quick search for "Indians" or "Native Americans" using one of the many search engines on the World Wide Web would turn up approximately one-half million results. The following sites should help those interested in Native American culture and history find what they are looking for. Rather than include sites that deal specifically with one tribe or one topic, these links are meta-sites that help to further narrow the search field.

<http://www.csulb.edu/projects/ais/>

American Indian Studies Program at California State University, Long Beach is an extensive meta-site which lists some of the better sites of Native American interest. It was developed by Troy Johnson, a well-known scholar in the field of modern Native American Studies.

<http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/k12/naha/natime.html>

Timeline for Native American History is a nicely put-together chronology of events in Native American history with links to other sites that delve into the topic in more detail.

<http://members.aol.com/bbbenge/newlinks.html>

Tribes, States and Government Agency

An alphabetically arranged meta-site with page references to both place and tribal name. The background image is a distraction, but the site is well-organized.

<http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html>

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

The home-page for the U.S. government agency that administers programs for Native Americans. A wealth of information including statistics and legal material.

<http://www.ipl.org/ref/native/>

The Internet Public Library — Native American Authors

This section of the IPL lists works written by and biographical information on Native American authors. A good source for those interested in Native American literature.

<http://www.asu.edu/clas/history/h-amindian/>

H-AMINDIAN

The homepage of the discussion list. It contains archives of posts to the list which are an excellent resource. Most of those who subscribe and post to the list are academics specializing in Native American issues.

<http://americanindian.net/>

On This Date In North American Indian History, by Phil Konstantin

This site is, more than likely, the largest meta-site dealing with Native American topics on the Internet. If there is a site that contains information on Native Americans, it will be here. The only problem with the site is that there are so many links, it can be overwhelming.

<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/westweb/>

WestWeb: Western History Resources

A growing collection of topically-organized links to Western history resources. Created and maintained by Catherine Lavendar of the City University of New York. The site is broken down into thirty-one different chapters, each of which contains numerous links to sites that specialize in that topic. The site is also indexed. This site should be one of the first places anyone interested in Native American topics should go to.

# Book Reviews

## Johannes Kleinschmidt, *"Do not fraternize": Die schwierigen Anfänge deutsch-amerikanischer Freundschaft 1944 – 1949*

by Andrea Mehrländer

*MOSAIC – Studien und Texte zur amerikanischen Kultur und Geschichte* is the title of a new scholarly series, edited by Hans Borchers, Bernd Engler, Hartmut Grandel and the late Jürgen Heideking and published by WVT Trier to give credit to the changing historical perception of the United States as a nation. What used to be characterized as a "melting pot" by generations of historians has now become a multicultural mosaic, emphasizing ethnic diversity and pluralism.

Johannes Kleinschmidt's study, originally submitted as his doctoral dissertation to the University of Tübingen in 1995, serves both the professional historian and the lay reader, and thus, appropriately ushers in this new series.

In his introduction, the author points out that recent historiography and journalism by Earl F. Ziemke (1975), Marc Hillel (1981) and Klaus-Dietmar Henke (1995), to name but a few, has provided us with vast literature on U.S. occupation policy, however, "[...] Die Geschichtsschreibung über die amerikanische Besatzungspolitik in Deutschland hat das Thema bislang vernachlässigt" (p. 13). Especially the topic of fraternization has often been wholly neglected or dealt with as a marginal aspect.

As of the August 1944 draft concerning the "Conduct of Allied Troops and German Characteristics

in Defeat," non-fraternization was officially defined as the "avoidance of mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity or intimacy, whether individually or in groups, in official or unofficial dealings. However, non-fraternization does not demand rough, undignified or aggressive conduct, nor the insolent overbearance which has characterised Nazi leadership" (p. 39). Non-fraternization policy was put into effect April 28, 1944, by the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS551), and lasted until October 1, 1945. Distributed to the soldiers as "Special Orders for German-American relations," a 3-page-leaflet explained the seven commandments of non-fraternization (see p. 66ff.).

In eight chapters, therefore, Kleinschmidt endeavours ...

a) to trace the genesis of the non-fraternization policy by going back to American experiences gathered during the Rhineland occupation of 1917/1918,

b) to analyse personal relationships between American soldiers and German civilians between 1944 and 1949 and

c) to examine the impact the non-fraternization policy had on both, Americans and Germans, taking into account immediate post-war enemy propaganda.

Whereas part one covers German-American relations under the non-fraternization policy (1944–1945),

part two assesses the post non-fraternization period (late 1945–1949) and focuses on three specific themes:

a) relationships between U.S. soldiers and German women, with emphasis on the Fiancée Act of June 29, 1946,

b) the upkeep of marriage prohibition until December 1946 (War Brides Act),

c) and the presence of Afro-American GIs in a country that for 12 years had been subject to blatant racism as an integral part of Nazi ideology.

Most of the examples Kleinschmidt uses to illustrate his points of argument are taken from the areas around Aachen, Düren, and Geilenkirchen—the so-called testing ground for non-fraternization policy. Although Kleinschmidt portrays U.S. General Lucius D. Clay as a personality deeply in doubt about the efficiency of any kind of non-fraternization policy, he fails to have a close look at the situation in Berlin. Instead, he simply acknowledges that the Berlin Airlift of 1949 was the watershed experience that turned American occupational troops into allied friends (p. 138ff.).

Kleinschmidt thus concludes that non-fraternization was used as a political measurement and/or punishment geared against all Germans, that it turned out a complete failure, and that relations between German women and Afro-American soldiers

developed in a more positive way than could have been expected after Nazi racism and the occupation of the Rhineland in 1917.

An obvious shortcoming of the book is the absence of a general index—presumably not provided for by the publisher, since later editions in the same series do have indexes. Between part one and two, Kleinschmidt included 18 rather rare pictures depicting American soldiers and their German girlfriends, fiancées or wives in post-war Germany. Unfortunately, there is no map showing American-controlled German territory between 1944 and 1949. The primary source

material Kleinschmidt consulted is far from impressive and is restricted to sources from the National Archives, Washington, D.C., the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., and three Bavarian archives. Apart from Kleinschmidt's unjustified criticism concerning Henke's treatment of non-fraternization policy, it would have served him well to have paid attention to Karen Anderson's study on wartime women, Neil Wynn's analysis of Black Americans in WW II and Studs Terkel's oral history of World War II.<sup>1</sup> Even though none of Kleinschmidt's findings are surprisingly new or unexpected to

scholars, it is a carefully conducted study that will be much appreciated by the general reader.

Johannes Kleinschmidt, *"Do not fraternize:" Die schwierigen Anfänge deutsch-amerikanischer Freundschaft 1944-1949* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1997), 256 pp. ISBN 3-88476-269-9, DM 49, 50.

#### Notes

1. Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981); Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1975); Studs Terkel, *"The Good War:" An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

### Wolfgang Splitter, *Pastors, People, Politics: German Lutherans in Pennsylvania 1740-1790*

by Andrea Mehrländer

Considering the most recent works on German Lutheran life in eighteenth-century North America, for example, A. Gregg Roeber's outstanding *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (1993) and Thomas J. Müller's insightful *Kirche zwischen zwei Welten: Die Obrigkeitsproblematik Heinrich Melchior Mühlens und die Kirchen Gründung der deutschen Lutheraner in Pennsylvania* (1994), Wolfgang Splitter's book on the dynamic interaction between the clergy and the laity among the extensive Lutheran population of colonial Pennsylvania is a most welcome addition, and, as such long overdue.

Looking at the period of 1740 to 1790, Splitter roughly chose Pastor Heinrich Melchior Mühlens's arrival in Pennsylvania (1742) to mark the beginning of his investigations, and Mühlens's death (1787) or rather the 1792 renaming of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in North America as German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium as two suitable ending points.

Composed in chronological order, Splitter examines the microcosm of the German Lutheran Church in general and of local parishes in particular in the first four chapters. Not only does he concentrate on the congregations' organizational structures and on the relations between the ministers and their European superiors, but also on the relations among the clergy, the church councils, and the laity. In doing so, Splitter made wide use of the 17 so-called Halle Reports, a collection of extracts from pastoral letters and correspondence sent over to Lutheran ecclesiastic authorities in England and Germany between 1744 and 1787, and the Halle Documents, a huge collection of manuscripts of the preachers from the Francke Institutions and their superiors in London and Halle.

Being introduced to Anton Wilhelm Böhme (1673-1722) and his successor Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegenhagen (1694-1776), who were both most active and influential in establishing the triangular relationship between Halle, London, and Penn-

sylvania in the 1730s, the reader then learns about Johann Martin Boltzius (1703-765) and Israel Christian Gronau (1714-1745), the two ministers struggling to serve the Salzburger community at Ebenezer, Georgia, before Gotthilf August Francke finally appoints 30-year-old Mühlens as the new pastor of the three Lutheran congregations at Philadelphia, New Hanover, and Providence.

Splitter then continues to explore Lutheran identity in colonial Pennsylvania and investigates Lutheran spiritual defense against worldly corruption, before he turns to a Germantown case study on German Lutheran congregations as political incubators (p. 66 ff.). This chapter brings us to the central topic of the book. Why, in proportion to their numbers, did the German Lutherans fail to become the political power in colonial and independent Pennsylvania that they should have become?

In order to answer this question, Splitter takes a macrocosmic view by

placing the individual clergyman (e.g. Johann Christoph Kunze and Heinrich Helmuth), vestryman, and layman (e.g. Jacob Barge) in the social and political environment of Pennsylvania under proprietary rule, during the Revolutionary War, and under the republican constitution (chapters five to twelve). For illustration, Splitter provides the reader with 15 tables and 10 figures, distributed throughout the book. Of tremendous help is Splitter's Appendix A, "Biographical data of Pennsylvania German Public officials, 1740-1790," which contains personal data of 349 Pennsylvania public officials who, as Splitter puts it, actually, probably, or possibly were of German descent and served in some political, administrative, judicial, or military function sometime between 1740 and 1790 (p. 325-362).

Splitter concludes that the behaviour of German Lutherans in Pennsylvania between 1740 and 1790 displayed a strong interaction between their status as British subjects or Pennsylvania citizens on the one hand and their role as Lutheran parishioners on the other. As a distinct group of Pennsylvania's population, German Lutherans defined themselves much more by ethnic descent than by religious affiliation. They strongly resisted assimilation and throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century succeeded in maintaining intact German enclaves (see chapter five). The German

Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania was born out of an ongoing theological conflict between various branches of German Protestantism over which was the legitimate spiritual heir to Martin Luther and the true custodian of his reformational doctrine. The hierarchical and autocratic structures introduced by the Lutheran Ministerium to the congregations were alien to both the Lutheran principle of local autonomy and to the American concept of the church as a body of independent, self-governed parishes of volunteers. See also Appendix B "Annual Elections of Pennsylvania German Public officials, 1758-1790" (p. 363-370).

What Splitter ignores, however, is the fact that Pennsylvania, "the best poor man's country" on earth (James T. Lemon, 1972) was like the other Middle Atlantic colonies New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, quintessentially an embryonic American state, which in its ethnic diversity, religious pluriformity and partisan politics had much more in common with the future United States than for example New England, or even Virginia. It was in "melting pot"-Pennsylvania that the first political parties emerged and a profusion of sects existed, of which the German Lutherans were but among the most prominent.<sup>1</sup>

Summing up, Splitter remarks: "Endeavouring to oust their rivals from the pulpits and to bring law and

order to strife-ridden congregations, Mühlenberg and his co-laborers established the colonial church as a Halle protectorate"—a mere extension of the missionary institutions August Herman Francke had founded in 1695 at Glaucha near Halle.

Splitter's clear, well-organized and informative study is most likely to become a classic—it fills an important gap in the history of 18<sup>th</sup> century German Lutheran life in Pennsylvania and will be of high value to both general readers and church scholars.

Wolfgang Splitter, *Pastors, People, Politics: German Lutherans in Pennsylvania 1740-1790* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1998), 401 pp. ISBN 3-88476-287-7, DM 68,00.

#### Notes

1. See: *Friends and Neighbors: Group life in America's First Plural Society*, ed. Michael Zuckerman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); and Patricia U. Bonomi, "The Middle Colonies: Embryo of the New Political Order," in *Perspectives on Early American History: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Morris*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan and George Athan Billias (New York: Harper, 1973).

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