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## The American Indian : the Creation of a National Native American Heritage, 1880-1920

Brian A. Schwegler  
Colby College

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# **The American Indian:**

**The Creation of a National Native  
American Heritage, 1880-1920**

**by**

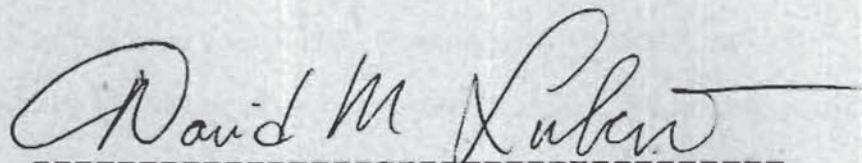
**Brian A. Schwegler**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
of the Senior Scholars' Program**

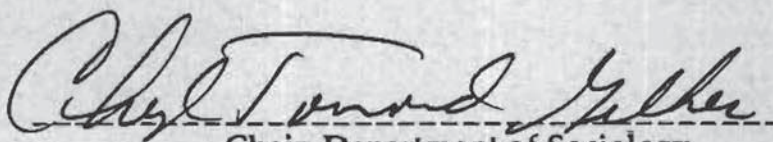
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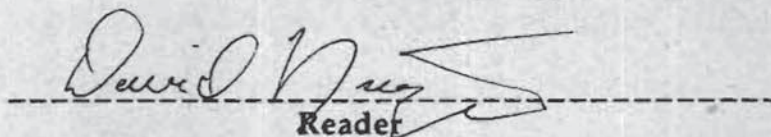
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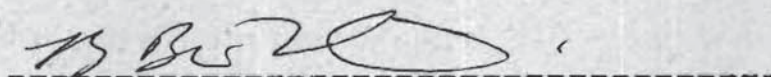
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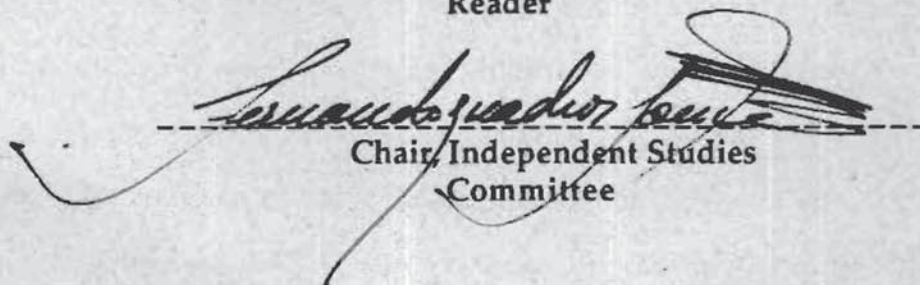
Chair, Department of Sociology  
and Anthropology



Reader



Reader



Chair, Independent Studies  
Committee



### Abstract

In this project, I examine several of the ideological forces acting upon Native American cultures from 1880-1920. During this period, Native Americans were subject to extraordinary pressure to assimilate, constituting a virtually bloodless war against traditional Native American identities. As a result, the ideology of the majority society infiltrated Native American tribal groups and helped to break down the traditional borders of tribal identity.

I focus on three major forces leading to the shift from traditional bounded identity to nebulous Pan-Indian identity. The first is the influence of the federal government and its policies, especially concerning Native American education. The American government attempted to break apart cultural groups over the course of two generations and, to a certain extent, succeeded. By removing Native American youths from their native cultural groups, the government denied them the chance to be socialized into their traditional identities. Instead, they were taught how to be "American Indians," an identity which was a combination of the various tribal characteristics, conceptions of the identity taken from the belief structure of the larger society, and syncretic traits of both groups, as well as some native to the new set of experiences faced by the Native American individuals.

The second influence on the shifting of identity is the appropriation and manipulation of symbols within Native American societies. The cultural influences of the majority society began to make an appearance in the traditional arts of Native Americans. The appearance of these new cultural traits in the works of art was the result of the hegemonic activities of the majority society within the traditional context of Native American culture. This process involved appropriation of a symbol of the subject cultures, their



arts, and the alteration of meanings in order to advance the ideological purpose of the majority culture. Most Native American groups were not aware of the process of appropriation of meaning by which symbols of traditional identity became tools for spreading the new ideology. By analyzing the works of art of various tribal groups from this time period, I demonstrate the extent to which the ideology of the majority society had infiltrated the tribal groups.

Newspapers and periodicals played an important role in expressing and shaping Native American identity during the period 1880-1920. Not all of these newspapers and periodicals produced by Native American groups during this period were produced on the reservations, and not all were intended solely for Native American audiences. Nonetheless, many of these publications played important roles in forming and producing an expression of the contemporary Native American identity. My analyses pay particular attention to large issues facing Native American groups cross-culturally, if there even was, by this point in time, major cross cultural variation. The hegemonic forces of the majority culture permeated the subject groups to the extent that certain publications whose goal was to contradict the ideological message of the majority society actually served to advance its causes. This shows the extent to which the enforced identity was accepted by Native Americans, and how they in turn used it in attempts at self-definition and defiance of the majority society.



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I would like to thank Dean Robert MacArthur, for his Special Projects funding aid, which allowed me to copy and record the information that was necessary for this project to make the step from my theoretical imaginings to a piece of social science research. However, the person who I am most indebted to for the primary source material in this paper is Sunny Pomerleau. Her ability to track down archival material existing in minute quantities across the country was a source of constant amazement to me. Even more impressive was her ability to convince the owners of these rare documents to lend them to me. Additionally, her smiling face and words of support as I stood by the circulation desk made me realize that what I was doing mattered to people other than myself.

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I would like to thank Constantine Hriskos for his help in getting this project started. While it didn't look like I was going to get the application turned in on time, with his help, I somehow managed.

For helping me to realize that there are many sides to scholarship, and that it is possible to be a person and a successful scholar, I have to thank Catherine Besteman. I only wish that I could have had access to her guidance and knowledge earlier in my undergraduate career.

For her tireless support and seemingly endless supply of signatures for bureaucratic papers, I need to thank Mary Beth Mills. In her classes I learned to question society, and the notion of culture. Her teaching helped me to uncover a desire for knowledge of how and why people act in the ways that they do.

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served as a constant source of inspiration for me, and made me realize that I truly wanted to be an anthropologist. Even more, his support made me realize that one day, I *will* be an anthropologist.

To my parents, Robert and Nancy Newman Schwegler, I owe many things. A family friend once told me of an individual who had, "A love of knowledge, and a love of life, both necessary qualities for an anthropologist." It is to these individuals who I owe these qualities in myself. Their example gave me inspiration, and their support made the darkest times a little brighter.

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## Introduction

This project is about power. It investigates the power exerted by the mainstream society on a peripheral social group, the ways in which this power affected those peripheral players, Native Americans, and the ways in which Native Americans attempted to empower themselves. The last was in some ways a futile gesture, because attempts at self-empowerment achieved the ends which the majority society desired, the creation of a single Indian identity for diverse Native American groups. The many levels of interaction and meaning that enveloped Native American groups and individuals in the period 1880-1920 are twisted and contorted. It is nearly impossible to see a simple action/reaction scenario at work. The forms of power at work in this, like any social interaction, encompass numerous individual actions in any given scenario.

Acting upon Native Americans at any time were countless forces attempting to empower or disempower. There were attempts by the mainstream society, or more aptly, the self-replicating structures of power within society (Foucault 1980), to alter traditional Native American notions of self and tribal identity. Resisting these attempts were disorganized groups of Native American individuals. They were disorganized for several reasons. First, there was no unified attempt, between diverse Native American groups, that succeeded in resisting the hegemonic forces of the mainstream society. Some attempts, like the Ghost Dance movement, were crushed by the agencies of the government before they came to fruition. During this period, the society was aware of the potential of Native American groups of disrupting the established social hierarchy. As a result, an ideology was



developed that guided mainstream relations with Native American groups. This ideology came forth in the assimilationist policies of the government and related social institutions.

Second, and related to this societal ideology, Native American groups were faced with a barrage of forces intent on destroying traditional identity, and preventing the creation of new notions of identity that would challenge the established order of American society. The intellectual climate of the period influenced the creation of this fear of traditional Native American identity. The period of this study coincided with that of many of the greatest social thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Social Darwinism was at its peak popularity, with the drive for civilization and industrialization as its contemporary focus. At the same time as this interest in the modern, there was an interest in the primitive. E.B. Tylor's Primitive Culture was published in 1871, and Lewis Henry Morgan's classic, Ancient Society was published in 1877. With Morgan's levels of society, savagery, barbarism, and civilization, influencing contemporary thought, it was inevitable that Native Americans became the subjects of attention. As "savages" within "civilization," Native Americans became a challenge to the guiding ideology of the society. America could not be civilized while Native Americans maintained their traditional lifeways in the midst of the society. In order to prove its position in the social hierarchy of civilized nations, America had to do something about the "savage" in its midst (Hoxie 1984). The ideological challenge posed by the existence of Native Americans singled them out for attention. Other groups within American society were subject to ideological disciplining, often with similar results. I do not claim that the pressures on Native Americans were unique, but I posit that they were the



conscious efforts of a society intent on transforming the cultural identity and allegiances of a social group within the society.

The society attempted to create a new identity for Native Americans, which I have labeled as Indian, borrowing the terms most commonly used to refer to Native American groups.<sup>1</sup> This identity had several levels. It was at once a social and economic role for Native Americans. The society attempted to create a Native American underclass united under a common ideology. Economically, Native Americans were intended to be either members of a rural or urban ethnic class, functioning as either semi-skilled laborers or as small-sale farmers. Concurrent with the creation of this class of Native Americans was the creation of a social role. Native Americans were supposed to internalize some of the guiding ideological values of the mainstream society. In effect, they were to accept the guiding ideology of the mainstream society, and replicate it through their actions, thereby maintaining the existing social order.

These attempts by the society were not entirely successful. At any stage in the disciplining process intended to force Native Americans to accept these role were forms of resistance on the part of Native American individuals. The forms of resistance were similar to those which James Scott describes occurring within contemporary Maylasian society. Scott's peasants had an understanding of the larger social systems acting upon them, and had, to a certain extent, an understanding of the futility of resistance. However, isolated acts of rebellion succeeded in making the attempted domination by the mainstream society incomplete, and helped to maintain elements of traditional Malay identity (Scott 1985). However, just as Maylasian peasants

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<sup>1</sup>This term is, as is well known, inappropriate. It refers to a mistake on the part of European "explorers," who referred to the indigenous peoples of North America as Indians, believing them to be the inhabitants of the Indian sub-continent.



were not able to shrug off the oppressive mantle of state control, Native American groups were not able to wholly ignore the pressures brought to bear by the society. The resulting Native American identity that developed was not the ideal role intended by the institutions of mainstream society, due in part to symbolic acts of resistance by Native Americans, nor was it traditional tribal identity. It was a syncretic mix of societal notions of Indianness, tribal influences, and newly created notions of identity developed during the collision of these ideological systems.

This paper is an attempt at outlining the ways in which society intended to create the Indian, the ways in which Native Americans attempted to resist these attempts, and ways in which this resistance did not succeed. Instead of attempting to view the argument from either Native American points of view, or from the point of view of the society, I have attempted, successfully I hope, at showing the larger phenomenon of Native American/societal relations. In order to do so, I view one of the mechanisms of state control, the Federal Boarding School system. To show another aspect of shifting identity, this time in response to primarily economic pressures, I investigate the transformations of forms of Native American art during the period. Finally, I investigate print media produced by and for Native American groups in an attempt to show the level to which the ideological influences of the society permeated a form of public discourse, available, in theory to members of both the Native American and mainstream societal communities.

Before delving into this complex issue, it is necessary to show a specific example of this social phenomenon. In her study of the Gros Ventre group, Loretta Fowler describes the ways in which Native American life was affected by members of the American government bureaucracy, and the ways that



members of this tribal group attempted to respond (Fowler 1987).<sup>2</sup> Her descriptions mesh with my own arguments about the disruption, destruction, and re-formation of Native American tribal life, and provide a useful introduction to my own discussions of this complex social phenomenon. Thomas Biolsi's recent descriptions of historical life on the Lakota Reservation in South Dakota, also address similar issues to the ones I intend to discuss and aid in the clarification of this convoluted social phenomenon (Biolsi 1995).

Central to my argument is the concept that the traditional way of life was made unavailable to Native Americans by the end of the Nineteenth century. I argue that the traditional cultural organizational system was no longer applicable to Native Americans. Additionally, I contend that Native Americans accepted the ideology of mainstream society, or the ideology that mainstream society attempted to force upon them, to a certain degree, in order to fight feelings of *anomie* that occur when a culture lacks a guiding ideological system (Lévi-Strauss 1966). Actions on the part of the mainstream society rendered the pre-existing systems insufficient, and also forced an adaptation to the new ideology.

During the final two decades of the nineteenth century Native traditions vanished, or were changed to a degree that forced them to lose their previous significance. During this period, the American government had a policy outlawing the performance of traditional rituals, as part of its assimilation program. "By 1885...there were no more Indian wars, intertribal war parties, buffalo hunts, or sun dances. The United States government had

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<sup>2</sup>The Gros Ventre tribe was historically located in the Northwest Plains region. The Fort Belnap Reservation they share with the Assinibone tribe is located in Montana.



embarked upon a policy of *civilizing* the Lakota, (Biolsi 1995, 28 emphasis his)."

This policy was enforced on several levels. Each reservation had an Indian agent. The job of the agent was to oversee the actions of the Native Americans in residence, and report the activities to the Office of Indian Affairs. If this was the extent of the power of the agent, there would still be little motivation for the Native Americans to follow the wishes of the government. However, the agent had two important powers. First, the agent had the power to call in United States military personnel to disrupt any tribal ceremony, or action, deemed, by the agent, contrary to the government's policy. The use of force, or the threat of force was a tangible factor in the daily lives of Native Americans, and was a large deterrent to actions of Native American groups. In one well documented case, 72 Native Americans were removed from a reservation and placed in confinement at a military outpost in order to ensure that their tribes behaved according to the government's wishes.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the Indian agent was in charge of dispersing government funds and supplies to the Native Americans in residence. The move to the reservation lands made many tribes' traditional lifeways insufficient to guarantee survival. As a result, these groups became dependent on government supplies for food and shelter. If a tribal group was not behaving "properly," the agent could withhold the necessary supplies. Conversely, he could also reward certain individuals or smaller groups with extra goods. One of the ways to curry favor with the agent was to act in accordance with his wishes. For the most part, the desired behavior was that which was

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<sup>3</sup> These Native Americans were imprisoned at Fort Marion in Florida. These same individuals played a large role in shaping the art of the time period, and as a result, the ways in which Native Americans viewed their identity and history.



required by the government.<sup>4</sup> Following the government's instructions had tangible effects on the subsistence of Native American individuals and tribal units. "The Lakota...were even subject to the formidable power of the police and to coercion through the withholding of rations, (Biolsi 1995, 29)."

Fowler's Gros Ventre work showed how factors external to the tribe caused an upheaval in the internal social order of the group. These changes at once reinforced a type of tribal identity and simultaneously changed tribal power structures.<sup>5</sup> There were two major aspects of this internal culture change. The first dealt with societal prominence and relative social position. Prior to the move to the reservation, Gros Ventre males gained prominence in the tribe in three ways: success in warfare, success in hunting, and through demonstrations of generosity to other members of the tribe. During the reservation years, hunting and inter-tribal warfare were outlawed. These were no longer options for Gros Ventres interested in advancing their social position. In response to this loss of these traditional ritually potent activities, new activities gained societal prominence. Farming began to gain respectability, and success in farming allowed an individual to move upward within the group hierarchy. Instead of counting the number of horses taken in raids, or the number of enemies killed in battle, men's worth was measured in the number of fields tilled, or the heads of cattle owned. The principle of generosity was still venerated, so to prove one's value, one had to give freely. Since there was not an abundance of material wealth on the

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<sup>4</sup> One way to gain favor was to enroll children at the regional government boarding school. Fowler records that one Native American, in his efforts to gain material wealth, "even brought children to the school by force (which) won him considerable aid in his quest for prominence (Fowler 1987, 64)." It was in these schools that the ideology of the society was impressed upon members of the Native American communities. This, in turn, fed back into an acceptance of the ideology which influenced actions, which brought rewards... As I have said, these social interactions were inter-connected and convoluted.

<sup>5</sup>The resulting concept of tribal identity is related to the negotiated identity which I have claimed was the heritage created for and by Native Americans during this time period.



reservation, prominent members of the reservation community were forced to supplement their farming income with government funds and goods in order to live up to the community ideal. The way to earn this money was to act like a white, or as the government, through its schools and agents, said whites acted.<sup>6</sup> By embracing foreign ethnic characteristics, Gros Ventre men were able to gain the wealth necessary to become better Gros Ventres.

The second part of this cultural shift concerns the way in which the larger society was able to undermine the established social order of Gros Ventre society. Traditional Gros Ventre society had been arranged into male age groups. Each age group had certain responsibilities, both ritual and political. In short, the older males had more power and authority than the younger males. Reservation life altered this hierarchy. On the reservation, there were two sets of conduct in action at once. There were the laws of the tribe, and the laws of the society. There were relatively few tangible benefits to following the old traditions, in contrast to the rewards gained by following the new laws. By attempting to merge with the mainstream society, Gros Ventre males could maneuver around the social constraints of the traditional social hierarchy, and could gain power, respect, and material wealth. It became possible to play both ends against the middle. By appealing to the government, one could gain wealth, which could, in turn, be used to gain tribal prominence.

An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the appointment of tribe members to periphery government positions on the reservation. The individuals holding some type of bureaucratic office were on the fringes of both societies. Mainstream society did not recognize them as full members,

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<sup>6</sup>The processes by which Native Americans were made aware of their proper social roles will be addressed in the body of this work.



and Gros Ventre society rejected them, to a certain extent, because they had removed themselves from the tribal power hierarchy. However, these individuals gained respect and power not previously available. Fowler provides an example of this in a description of the Native Police force. The Native Police were appointed by the Indian agent to enforce the laws of society. These individuals were primarily young men. These individuals would normally have little power in tribal life. However, they were able to enforce the laws of the co-existing social order. This placed them on a level equal with that of the older men in the traditional social order. The result was a disintegration of the power structure of the tribe, where numerous individuals had claims to a limited amount of power (Fowler 1987). For the most part, the traditional leaders were the losers in this power struggle; they lacked the ability to enforce their claims to power, while the individuals existing primarily within the mainstream society's power structure had tangible power since they had the society to back up their claims and actions.<sup>7</sup>

During this period, the American government had a single policy that was used in dealings with Native American groups. There were no longer individual policies for distinct tribal units. The same organizational structure was in place on reservations across the United States. "Although the Lakota had formerly been recognized by the United States in treaties as a 'nation,' the government no longer made treaties with Indians, and the internal sovereignty of native policies had been denied, (Biolsi 1995, 28)." Similar actions were taking place on reservations across the country. Therefore, Fowler's analysis of Gros Ventre life, as well as Biolsi's work with the Lakota, identify trends which will be assumed to be in place in all of the Native

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<sup>7</sup> This analysis clarifies the importance of the appointment of an Indian police officer in one of the issues of a reservation periodical analyzed in another section of this paper.



American groups and policies regarding Native American groups analyzed in this paper.

The historical phenomenon of an emerging Indian identity among Native American groups during the period 1880-1920 was the result of many interlocking social interactions. There were actions by the government, through established societal institutions, i.e. the boarding schools, which served to discipline a common ethnic identity into these Native American subjects. Acting in concert with these bureaucratic systems was the influence of the market economy of the society, which placed economic pressures upon the subjects; the examination of ledger art, and the transformation of this identity-building commemorative form into a commercial product shows this dynamic. Finally, there were forces within the newly established nationwide Indian ethnic community which reinforced the ideological message of the mainstream society. Some of these internal agents of hegemony were the print media sources examined in this paper.

The combination of these forces had the effect of creating a national Native American heritage. This heritage had, at least partially, an imagined past, a constantly negotiated present, and an idealized future (provided by the guiding assimilationist ideology). This created within the Native American population of the United States, a problem of conflicting, or at least overlapping, identities. Native Americans were, at any time, torn between expressing a tribal identity, a useful, negotiated identity, and an idealized societal one. The expression of one of these levels of identity was not feasible within contemporary society, because there was no accepted societal position for any single identity. The tribal past was outdated, and could not survive without modification outside of the shrinking reservation land; the negotiated identity lacked societal recognition, by this I mean that there was



no American who was also an Indian, there was only an American Indian, a category with a solid, societally created social role; the idealized societal identity was simply that, idealized. It was based too heavily on theory, and lacked any real relation to the political, social, and economic situations facing Native Americans in their everyday lives.

This is not the final study on the subject of historical Native American identity. There are too many interconnected issues to be fully addressed in this, or I feel, any single work. One of the problems lies within the subject. The dynamic being examined is the consolidation of multiple group identities into a single national culture. In order to understand how this occurred, specifics about the different ways in which this was attempted cross-culturally are needed. This is a logistical impossibility. Even if this were a contemporary phenomenon which could be examined in real-time, the project is simply too huge. As a historical project, the problems are even greater. The researcher is limited to the materials that have survived, and to which he or she can gain access. However, this does not denigrate the research itself, or the need for similar research. The means by which national cultures are created, and the effects of this culture are poorly understood social interactions. In the current political climate of American and global society, an understanding of these processes is necessary. An understanding of the ways in which the state has operated historically does not immediately reflect the actions of contemporary states, but it helps to clarify potential meanings for these actions. Additionally, it provides a point of reference so that future actions on the part of states can be anticipated and evaluated for potential effects on subject groups.



## Chapter I

### Boarding School Students: Native American Ideological Subjects

There has been recent research attention aimed at examining the role that boarding school education played in the formation of ethnic identity among Native Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (McBeth 1983, Lomawaima 1993, 1994, Biolsi 1995). While this research has shown how the mechanisms of state control both internal and external to the school system helped to shape common ethnic feelings among the student body, the formation of a Pan-Indian identity is taken somewhat for granted. There is a large gap in the scholarship when it comes to dealing with the actual manner in which this identity was formed, and the reasons for its formation.

This gap in the theoretical analysis of the data is important. The data supports the conclusions made by the scholars, and so the gap is an understandable one. Native American youths were brought, often forcefully, to the reservation schools, and thrown into classes and dormitories with youths from cultures as different from each other as was the white society. Their languages were forbidden, and their cultural practices outlawed. They could not look to their tribal history for guidance and support. There were two primary sources of influence acting on Native American youths within the federal boarding schools, Native American peer groups, and federal agents (individuals employed, and empowered, by the federal government within the schools themselves). In response to the influence of these groups,



a new ethnicity developed among Native American graduates of the boarding schools. This ethnic category formed the basis for a Pan-Indian identity.

This term in itself is a confusing one. In the contemporary post-modern intellectual climate, the notion of Pan-anything tends to serve as a disclaimer; it allows a researcher to hint at large meanings without actually being forced to define what is being discussed. Rather than attempt to link my use of the term with that of other scholars, I intend to define how it will be used solely for this paper. Pan-Indian identity is a personal or group identity used by or for Native Americans. It does not relate to any specific group history or tradition, and the marking factors of the identity i.e. language, dress etc. do not correspond to any pre-existing identity<sup>8</sup>. It is a conglomeration of traits taken from various Native American cultures blended into a new form. The new form is unique, but has features which are recognizable ethnic markings<sup>9</sup>. Notions of Pan-Indian identity are interesting because they lack firm definitions. It is a type of marking understood and accepted by the society and Native Americans, but there is little reasoning to explain its existence. Within American society, certain things are labeled "Indian." This paper attempts to answer how these notions of Indianness developed.<sup>10</sup>

I find that the standard description of the history of Native American education lacks a theoretical explanation. There is an understanding that the

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<sup>8</sup>Any distinct feature will be related to a tribal history, at least superficially. The key to this argument is the understanding, or acceptance, that the symbols, while outwardly similar have changed in meaning from their original context.

<sup>9</sup>The factors which mark groups as "ethnic" are too numerous to mention here. One of the goals of this chapter is to prove that this Pan-Indian identity, which I have identified, was indeed an ethnic category.

<sup>10</sup>The form of Pan-Indian identity evades definition. As a social science topic, this makes it more interesting, and worthy of study. Because of its evasive nature, it has inspired works with titles like, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Hertzberg 1971).



reader pulls from the argument as to why the children banded together, and why they formed a group, but this understanding is unwritten. It is given as a truth, because the historical facts back it up. However, it is not the job of social scientists simply to report the facts, but to uncover the reasons behind them. The question is not only about where and when Pan-Indianism developed, but also why and how.

I intend to argue that the experiences of the Native American youths are similar to those of migrant ethnic groups within a state structure. The forces acting upon Native Americans during the time period of the study, and the ways in which Native American groups and individuals reacted to these influences follow a model of social organization similar to that of other ethnic minority groups within American society.

Native American identity has always been a tricky question. There are no hard and fast rules for classifying Native Americans within American society. This is because Native Americans fall between ethnic and racial categories. They exist in a hazy part of the periphery of the American society. As Thomas Biolsi has pointed out, the bi-polar racial categories of the society do not fit with Native Americans (Biolsi 1994). Native Americans have historically been in a marginalized position within the American racial system. They were not white, but they were not black, the major category, at the time, available to non-whites. The myths guiding the actions of members of society towards non-white do not always apply to Native Americans (Biolsi 1995, Sider 1995). However, as Gerald Sider mentions in his discussions of the uses for cultural systems of thought, diverse Native American groups had been placed together for the purpose of classification and legislation regardless of ethnic identity (Sider 1995, 115). Following a precedent set by early colonial authorities, the American bureaucracy was unwilling to recognize Native



Americans as a racial group, but neither would it recognize the ethnic variance of Native American groups<sup>11</sup>. There was a recognition of difference between groups, hence the numerous treaties between tribes and the government, but the bottom line was that all native American groups were, at base level, related (Biolsi 1995). In order to overturn this belief, there would have to have been a recognition by the members of society of Native American groups being different while existing within a single racial category. This was a privilege accorded only to white European groups during the time period of this study.

This nebulous definition of Native American identity created problems of analysis for me during the course of this investigation. I could make a case for pre-1880 ethnicity among individual Native American tribal groups, but during the middle of this period, I found this task increasingly difficult. Some of the traditional classifications for ethnicity within American society, language, and labor (Williams 1988), seemed nearly to disappear as Native American groups underwent radical changes in their lifeways at the hands of the American state. I realized that the period that I was studying marked not only the disappearance of an identity, but also the emergence of a new ethnic category created, in part, by the majority society. I realized that this period, frequently referred to as the "Assimilationist Period" (Hoxie 1984), did not mark only the attempted assimilation of Native Americans into mainstream society, but also the creation of a new ethnic category within American society.

Martin Marger and Philip Obermiller have discussed the emergence of ethnicity within an internal migrant group, the "Maritimers" in Toronto,

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<sup>11</sup>Native Americans were in a Catch-22. They were not allowed to be the same, neither was the difference that they recognized legitimate in the view of society.



Canada (Marger and Obermiller 1987). Several of their major points are valuable when examining the case of Native American boarding school students, and when analyzing the scholarship that has thus far investigated the issue. They critique a tendency of North American social scientists to label ethnicity either as an unchanging entity that remains no matter what type of social pressures are exerted upon it, or as a temporary phase to be replaced by categories of the larger society (Marger and Obermiller 1987, 1). They argue, however, that ethnicity is processual and variable, according to the setting. The underlying factor is a feeling of communality shared by the members of the ethnic group. Also, ethnicity only occurs during a conflict between heterogeneous groups within a social setting. This conflict leads to in-group acceptance of the identity, and out-group recognition of it.

Two shortcomings of ethnic analyses can be clearly seen in the issue at hand. Contemporary American society has viewed the Pan-Indian movement as an extension of a natural, enduring Native American identity<sup>12</sup>. Pan-Indianism is simply the form that this identity took on when it came into contact with a certain set of social conditions. It was the same identity, just in a transitional state. This argument assumes that on some philosophical level, there is a pure form of ethnic identity that cannot be expressed through words or actions. It is an understood entity, that permeates the actions of all the members of an ethnic group. The identity is constant, but the form is always in transition.

The actions of the larger society show a dependence on a different school of thought. To the larger American society, and the institutions that decided social policy, tribal identity was simply a transitional thing. It

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<sup>12</sup>This has led to the continued popularity of images of "traditional" Native Americans, and has added to the imagined validity of cross-cultural Indian religious beliefs currently popular on the periphery of the American spirituality.



developed in order to organize society until the benefits of state structured capitalism could assume control over the members of society. These actions were simply an extension of the "White Man's Burden" that has permeated Western society for centuries. The ideal form for any group to take is the Western model, and the actuality of the situation is secondary to the perceived need of a people to be civilized. As James Ferguson's research with bureaucratic systems in Lesotho clearly shows, this burden persists to the present (Ferguson 1990).

These models are both, in one way or another, nostalgic dreams of an idyllic world. There is no eternal identity that guides all of our actions and lies dormant only to arise in times of need. This is not human interaction, but the action of a benevolent deity. Nor is civilization the answer to every society's questions about the meaning of life. Ethnicity changes in response to minute changes in the social environment (Barth 1969, Williams 1988). It is the product of a certain alignment of social features, and can only be repeated if the conditions are replicated exactly. But, as any scientist, physical or social, will agree, these conditions are only replicated in the laboratory, and not in life.

The Pan-Indian identity that emerged after the establishment of the boarding school system is therefore an ethnic phenomenon isolated from the pre-reservation period. Nostalgic remembrances about previous lifestyles may exist, but the reality of life is that the Pan-Indian followers, or those in that ethnic group, created a society as similar to the traditional one as Chinatown is to China.

The perceptions of the group by its members and by the majority society also played key roles in establishing this new ethnic identity. The practices within the boarding schools show that majority society viewed all of



the Native American students as similar, which led to interaction with the society which was regulated by national ideological trends<sup>13</sup>. As parts of an individual cultural monolith, which Native American identity was in the terms of the society prior to the reservation and assimilation period, Native Americans had power that was symbolically beyond the control of the mainstream society, because it existed external to the cultural categories of the society (Leach 1976, Douglas 1959). Assimilation was a combined political economic and symbolic gesture. The symbolic aspects of the ritual of assimilation placed Native Americans within newly created cultural categories. These categories had rules of behavior defined by the society which placed Native Americans within a matrix of control where their actions could be monitored by the society, and their actions influenced and regulated. These symbolic aspects were complimented by the mechanisms of state control that formed the concrete bonds that held Native Americans (Foucault 1980, Rabinow 1980). The threat of force, the control of resource distribution, the political pressures, and the ideological influences acting on Native Americans completed the conceptual walls of the prison into which Native Americans "assimilated," (Biolsi 1995, Lomawaima 1993).

The following discussion describes attempts by the state at controlling and disciplining Native Americans within a single social institution, the Federal Boarding Schools. These were not the only types of schools open to Native Americans during this time period, but they were the most popular with the government<sup>14</sup>. Other levels of the Native American education

<sup>13</sup>The specifics of daily life within the schools will be discussed later in the chapter, with attention paid to the relation between the ideology of the society and the policy of the schools.

<sup>14</sup>I make this assumption from the following information. Students who showed promise in other Native American schools, on-reservation boarding schools, or non-boarding schools were often transferred to the boarding schools for further training. This allowed the government to more effectively discipline the students with the greatest potential, and who therefore were the greatest threat to the system.



system included on-reservation day and boarding schools, and mission schools. The latter were being phased out by the period of this study. In the 1870s, the government cut funding to the mission schools, and took over primary control over the education of Native American youths (Hoopes 1940). By 1895, Native American education was a major governmental priority; there were over two hundred schools educating 18,000 native American youths at a cost of nearly two million dollars per year (Hoxie 1984, 189). I would argue that the reason for this action was to create the Indian identity which is the focus of this work.

The descriptive nature of the discussion makes the events described seem like absolutes. This is not the case. The mechanisms of control or resistance were not absolute. This holds true for the entire discussion. Rather than interject this realization throughout the paper, I am making the statement that there were simultaneous actions of oppression and resistance. Discussing them concurrently would provide the reader with the same problems that I, as a researcher was faced with, unraveling and deconstructing the social interactions to find meanings. By describing these actions separately, I am attempting to clarify the situation, and not to hide or ignore the activities of actors within the historical narrative. With this in mind, the next section deals with attempts at control by the state within the boarding schools.

Within each boarding school, space was strictly controlled<sup>15</sup>. The use of space as a control mechanism within the boarding schools has been well documented (Lomawaima 1993, 1994). Foucault's notions of the use of observation and discipline within prison settings are appropriate for this

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<sup>15</sup>For the purposes of this paper, the term "boarding school" refers specifically to the off-reservation federal boarding schools.



discussion (Foucault 1980, Rabinow 1980). The physical school was set up with an emphasis on observation of the Native American students, or prisoners. From their inception in the early 1880's the boarding schools were organized according to the model established by Richard H. Pratt's Carlisle school. Pratt, a military officer who gained recognition by "civilizing" Native American captives at Fort Marion, Florida, was a driving force behind the establishment of the boarding school system. The boarding schools functioned as a mixture of military organization and contemporary reform school education (Szabo 1994).

In these institutions, the student body was divided and organized into categories created by the agents of state control. Students were divided by age and sex for the purposes of education and lodging. Interaction primarily occurred between individuals of the same age and gender (Lomawaima 1993, 1994, McBeth 1988, Shannon 1971, Littlefield 1989). Each group had its own living quarters, which was under the direct observation of a member of the school's staff. The purpose of this observation was to insure that the Native American youths were at all times abiding by the rules of the school, which were intended to help the Native Americans fully embrace all aspects of American culture (Hoopes 1940).

In his description of Native American education during the period, Alban Hoopes states that the schools were set up to insure that the "Indian develops gradually into a citizen of the United States. Essential to this is an abandonment of tribal relations and dealing with them as persons, not tribes or bands, or in other words, individualizing them (Hoopes 1940, 53)." This use of the term individual is an interesting one. I posit that the individual imagined is a Foucauldian individual, or in other words, a non-individual. The ideal Native American student was one who believed himself to be an



individual, but whose concept of self was based on ideas of the mainstream society about what Native American conceptions of self should be. The boarding schools were "sociological laboratories" (Hoopes 1940) where Native Americans were indoctrinated into the ideology of the mainstream society. Referring to his tenure at Carlisle, Pratt said,

"It was necessary to teach them (the Native American students) the most elementary lessons. Among other things, how to put on their pants, the need of combing the hair, and how to pronounce their names in the English language (quoted in Hoopes 1940, 55)"

These were lessons of importance to the society, but which had little relevance to cultural specificity of the backgrounds of the Native American students. This example is representative of the attitude which permeated Native American education during the period (Hoopes 1940, Littlefield 1989). The knowledge that Native American individuals and tribes held was unimportant to mainstream society. The knowledge of society was important, and the education of Native American youths was an exercise in societal power. By imposing the knowledge of how to function as a member of mainstream society on these youths, society was creating for them a discourse which served to organize their lives. It subjugated them to the state system (Foucault 1980). The imposition of state power upon Native Americans occurred through the boarding schools, and it was in these institutions that Native Americans were supposed to accept the ideological lessons being disciplined into them. The schooling process was an exercise in ideological discipline, which destroyed traditional Native Americans' conceptions of the self, and replaced them with a concept of the self as part of a group, although with a hidden specific identity. Outwardly, Native Americans were being taught to be members of mainstream society, but in



effect, they were being taught to be American Indians, members of a marginalized ethnic group within the state structure.

The specific daily life within the boarding schools gives insights into the ways in which this process occurred. First, the rules which have been alluded to but not yet fully explained are important. The most important rule within the schools was that tribal languages were not allowed to be spoken. All communication had to be held in English, the language of the society of which the youths would eventually become a part. This rule was enforced in several ways. Speaking a tribal language led to corporal punishment and/or the withdrawal of privileges, including food (Frederickson 1989, Shannon 1971, Littlefield 1989, Lomawaima 1994).

Language was not the only part of the daily lives of the students that the schools' administrators controlled. Students were forced to change their appearances and personal conduct from that with which they had been raised. As previously stated, the students at the boarding schools were divided into groups based on age and sex. These groups were organized according to a model of a military company. For each group, there was a student leader, who often had a title similar to those given to students in military schools (Lomawaima 1994, Shannon 1971)<sup>16</sup>. These student officers were in charge of their "companies." This was intended as a means of dividing the student body in order to break down solidarity among the students, and to force the students to discipline themselves (Foucault 1980). This action was intended

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<sup>16</sup>These student leaders were either elected by their peers, or were chosen by the administration for their ability to lead. This term is an interesting one. I am unsure about the criteria used for measuring ability to lead, but I would assume that it related to a student's affinity for the educational and ideological materials being taught. If that were the case then the ability to lead shows an ability to follow, much like the model of the military, where it is the job of an officer to pass on information through the chain of command, and not necessarily to promote individual thought, which was constant with the educational philosophy of mainstream society. This further proves the point about the assimilation goal of Native American education.



to bring the chain of observation by the disciplining group, the administration, into the private spaces of the students, which would normally have been beyond the direct control and observation of the authorities, who were outsiders to the Native American students' groups.

This ordering according to age was not necessarily different from the tribal life of certain Native American groups, but the rules that accompanied this division undoubtedly were different from the tribal specifics. Age defined groups have been observed frequently within Native American tribal groups. These groups served as support groups throughout the lives of Native Americans. By uniting numerous individuals experiencing the same processes of social role transformation, these groups eased the transitions through liminal phases in the social lives of individual tribal members (Turner 1969). In most cases, the guides for these social groups were established members of the individual cultural group to which the liminal individuals were a part. These guides helped to reaggregate the individuals into society, and passed along important cultural knowledge intended to help the liminal individuals fulfill an established social role. Within the boarding schools, however, the federal employees usurped this position of authority and changed the social meaning of the age group divisions. Instead of being guided through a process intended to place individuals within a social role defined by an individual tribal group, the government attempted to aggregate Native Americans into a role within the mainstream society.

Symbolically, an analysis of this phenomenon is interesting. Native Americans entered the boarding schools as members of established cultural categories (their individual tribes). Their tenure within the schools was a liminal period for the students, where they lost their previous social, cultural, and economic status. Upon leaving the school, these Native Americans were



re-aggregated within American society. They were given an established social role, as lower class laborers, and an established social identity, as Indians.<sup>17</sup>

Central to Foucault's arguments concerning discipline and ideological control is the notion of "bio-power" (Foucault 1980). Control over the physical presence of ideological subjects is one of the most important parts of the disciplining process. By controlling the bodies of Native American youths, the school administrators had real and symbolic control over the students themselves. By manipulating the physical environment of the students, school administrators intended to disorient the students and remove them from the cultural environments with which they were familiar, therefore making them more susceptible to the ideology of the mainstream society.

In the school environment, this physical manipulation had several levels. The physical appearance of the students was controlled by administrators. The students were forced to wear government issued clothing, and to follow strict guidelines regarding grooming (Shannon, Lomawaima 1993, 1994). The result was a uniform appearance for all boarding school students. By outlawing clothing and grooming habits from individual tribal groups, the school administrators removed a major means of cultural identification from the students<sup>18</sup>.

The daily lives of the students were also rigidly controlled. As in penal institutions or military establishments, the schools operated on enforced

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<sup>17</sup>This analysis is drawn from the works of Victor Turner (1969).

<sup>18</sup> The only time during which students were allowed to wear non-government issue clothing were for administration organized social event, primarily bi-weekly dances. At this time, students were allowed to express a measure of individuality through their physical appearance. However, as Lomawaima (1993) has shown, the administration still attempted to retain control over the bodies of the female students, and most importantly, their sexuality. At all times, the female students were required to wear bulky government undergarments. These gray "bloomers" were intended as a control device. They were the chastity belts of the boarding school.



schedules. The days included reveille, prayer time, class time, exercise time, and work time. Students were expected to be on time to all of the required activities, or were disciplined. They were required to march when in public spaces within the school grounds, and were allowed to walk only in certain places. At all times, their actions were being observed by members of the faculty, and through the organizational system of the student body, other students (Shannon 1971, Lomawaima 1994)<sup>19</sup>. For group activities, students were required to appear with members of their age groups, arranged in military parade fashion.

At all times, the students were, in theory, under the surveillance of members of the faculty. Within the classrooms, the authority figure was the teacher or mentor. Each dormitory was under the control of a housefather, or matron, whose duty was to keep order and to enforce curfew, language, and cleanliness rules. These figures were also in charge of certain aspects of discipline. Many dormitories had rooms set aside for individuals accused of breaking the rules of the school. Similar to solitary confinement cells in contemporary prisons, offenders were kept separate from their peers and given little or no nourishment until their sentence was served (Shannon 1971, Lomawaima 1994). As Foucault has discussed, discipline is most effective when used on individuals (Foucault 1980). By removing offenders from possible support groups (peers) the boarding school administrators hoped to remove feelings of solidarity between and sympathy for those caught breaking the rules. The matrons and housefathers were also the ones who frequently administered corporeal punishment for offenders (Lomawaima 1993, Shannon 1971).

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<sup>19</sup>As Foucault has discussed, this observation could be real or imaginary. The threat of observation, over time, is enough to maintain order in disciplinary organizations (Foucault 1980).



These alienating conditions were intended to break the will of Native Americans to cling to their tribal identities and to destroy resistance to the ideological message of the society. For Native American youths, the removal, often forceful, from their communities was devastating. Many students could not take the pressure and attempted to return to their homes. Upon their capture, run-aways were treated severely, subject to beatings, the withholding of food, and solitary confinement (Shannon 1971). Not all students were so lucky. Ruby Shannon described an incident where two Native American boys fled from the Riverside School in Ondanarko, Oklahoma into the desert, where they died from exposure to the elements (Shannon 1971).

The policies of the schools were aimed at creating an ethnic minority with an established place within American society. Contemporary social theorists (Williams 1988, Barth 1969) have discussed, among other complex ideas, class aspects of ethnic identity. The schools were supposed to create for Native Americans an ethnic identity and class position. Native Americans were conceptualized, by social policy makers, as lower-class citizens (Littlefield 1989). The goal of the assimilation policy was to remove Native Americans from the reservations, where they had the benefits of land and assured income, through government aid, without being forced to contribute to the mainstream society. Native American reservations were seen as a drain on the society<sup>20</sup>. This threat was more imagined than real. The actual cost of maintaining social programs for Native Americans was relatively low. It was the fact that Native Americans lacked the social responsibilities of the members of mainstream society, and enjoyed benefits not available to full members of society that caused a problem. The assimilationist federal policies

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<sup>20</sup>A larger discussion of this phenomenon can be found in Chapter 3.



were attempts to incorporate the Native Americans into the political economy of the society (Lomawaima 1993).

The courses taught at the institutions were intended to create a specific social and economic profile for Native Americans. Men were supposed to be farmers or semi-skilled laborers, and women, if they were to engage in any trade, it was supposed to be as domestic servants. Essentially, the boarding schools were organized to create an ethnic underclass, intended to support the existing social order. Hollis Frissell, principal of the Hampton Institute, one of the boarding schools, said, "Indians [were] people of the child races... in looking forward to their future I believe we should teach them to labor in order that they be brought to manhood, (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 193)." The definition of manhood is ambiguous, because he later stated that "the Indian could never be an Anglo-Saxon (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 193)," implying that the Native Americans could not be full members of the elite of society. This shows the extent to which those affiliated with the institutions were students and teachers of the ideology, and proves the point that there was an attempt not to integrate Native Americans into the mainstream, but to place them in a lesser position within the society.

Placing Native Americans within this role in society would benefit not only Native Americans, but the rest of society as well. An article run in *Harper's Weekly*, March 22, 1902, spelled out the reasoning behind the creation of this type of Indian laborer. It stated that "Manual training would enable tribesman to take menial jobs while the white men at the present engaged in these occupations could turn their attention to more intellectual employments, (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 194)."

The control and instruction of women in these institutions has been recorded elsewhere (Lomawaima 1993), so this paper will only briefly discuss



women's education within the boarding schools. The education of men within the schools will also be briefly examined.<sup>21</sup>

The curriculum was sex-segregated. The overall organization was similar with regard to the sexes, but the classes themselves were different. All entering students spent the full day in the classroom. After competence in certain areas, i.e. reading and writing, was demonstrated, students spent half of the day in the classroom and half of the day in vocational training<sup>22</sup>. Estelle Reel, the superintendent of Indian Education at the turn of the century once wrote that further English language instruction was allowed only, "by special authority of this Office (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 195)." The office referred to was the National Office of Indian Education, so it can be safely assumed that permission for special cases of instruction was rare, if it occurred at all. For men, the vocational training was primarily agricultural. They were taught the use of modern farming methods and machine use. In addition, they received training in semi-skilled trades like carpentry and metalsmithing. Regardless of the level of competency shown by individual students, it was difficult to receive instruction for "professional" jobs (Lomawaima 1994, McBeth, Shannon 1971).

The vocational training was hands-on instruction. Older students were each given plots of land within the school fields where they were required to raise vegetables. A portion of the food produced went to the school, the rest was sold, with the proceeds returning to the student

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<sup>21</sup>This paper is not intended to describe the specifics of the boarding schools, rather it is an investigation into a social phenomenon, the partial creation of an ethnic group within a state structure. Therefore, analysis of the social interactions, and not descriptions of life within the schools will be described in detail. A full investigation of the boarding school system would require a greater investment of time and energy than is possible under the auspices of this project.

<sup>22</sup>All students, regardless of age, were required to help in the basic upkeep of the school grounds. These chores required mostly cleaning of the residence areas and classroom buildings (Lomawaima 1993).



(Lomawaima 1993). The maintenance of the schools grounds, and tending of the school's herds were also duties of older students. These activities gave students a chance to practice the skill that would, over time, become their vocations (Shannon 1971).

The curriculum for female students was structurally the same, but with different subject interests. Younger students attended classes all day, and older students spent half of the day in the classrooms and half of the day in on the job training. As previously stated, this training was intended to turn young women into domestic workers. In Reel's words, "The Office (of Indian Education) will require the superintendents of all Indian schools to see that their large Indian girls become proficient in cooking, sewing, and laundry work, (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 195)." In interviews with Native American alumni of the boarding schools, Lomawaima (1994) recorded the frustration that these students felt at spending entire days darning socks, peeling potatoes, and washing floors. Just as the male students spent their time growing food to support the school and repairing the schools buildings, female student labor was necessary for the survival of the school. The students provided the school with nearly limitless free labor, all done in the name of advancement of the Indian cause. The ideology was such that the schools' administrators believed that patching trousers would prepare the students for meaningful lives within mainstream American society. "Upon this work more than any other, depend the advancement of the condition of the Indian, (Reel 1902, quoted in Hoxie 1984, 196)." This comment referred to the instruction of men in the proper use of a plow.

The preceding discussion has been aimed at outlining the ways in which the mainstream American society attempted to create, out of diverse Native American cultures, a single ethnic group, the Indian. The problem



with classifying the social role of Native Americans revolves around the lack of a cohesive definition of Indian identity. Because of the varied nature of experience prior to incarceration within the federal schools, exiting students held a variety of "ethnic" characteristics. What is important for this part of the paper is not what they brought in, and how much of their original tribal identity, if any, survived, but what new organizational systems they came out with. By creating an identity for these individuals, the society could not fully erase individuality, the concept itself is ludicrous. However, it was possible for traditional identity, to be overlain by additional levels of meaning and organizational structures<sup>23</sup>. These new ideological concepts were the markers for Indian identity, and formed the basis for identifying individuals as members of the emerging social group.

Using the categories of ethnic formation and analysis arranged by Barth (1969), Williams (1988), and Marger and Obermiller (1991), I intend to construct the Indian in late nineteenth and early twentieth century American society. Williams discusses a tendency for social scientists to view the notion of a common economic identity as influencing the creation of an ethnic identity. Sharing a position within the societal political economy provides part of the motivation for the creation of ethnic identity. As Alice Littlefield discusses in her essay, "The BIA Boarding School: Theories of Resistance and Social Reproduction," there was an attempt by the administrators within the Bureau of Indian Affairs at creating an Indian underclass of unskilled and semi-skilled farmers and laborers (Littlefield 1989). By training Native Americans for only these types of positions, the society attempted to attain

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<sup>23</sup>For the purposes of this discussion, it is useful to view traditional identity as the individuality of the subject. While in their original cultural context, tribal identity was a marker of a lack of individualism, within a pluralistic society like the boarding schools, previous unity became a marking factor.



control over the productive capabilities of a section of the population. By doing so, the society created a cultural common ground, or a category of shared experience for Native Americans. As products of the boarding schools, Native Americans from various tribes achieved a similar socioeconomic status within the class stratified American society. Thus the boarding school was intended at satisfying what Williams (1988) has classified as one of the major determinants of cross-cultural ethnicity in recent scholarship.

According to the criteria set up by Barth (1969), I would argue that the accepted social position for the Indian was that of the traditional pariah. The identity of the pariah is not one that emerges from the ethnic group, but is one to which individuals are assigned, and indoctrinated. Interactions with the majority society give meaning to the ethnic identity, and serve to reify the boundaries erected in order to keep the ethnic group on the periphery of society. The interesting part of this argument, as it refers to the Native American situation, is the way in which pariahs are integrated into society. They are an unalienable part of society, with an established, and necessary social role (Barth 1969).

As American pariahs, Indians fit with these criteria nicely. First, Indian identity was not originally a product of Native American cultural interaction. Without contact with Western civilizations, Native Americans developed their own societies and cultures. The boarding schools were aimed at creating this "imagined community" (Anderson 1990) of Indians, and forcing it upon Native Americans. Second, boundaries to Native American social mobility were not products of Native American cultures, but were enforced through interaction with mainstream society. The larger society drew the boundaries, both physical and ideological, that contained Native



Americans. Interaction with society reified these boundaries, which were institutionalized and imposed on the Native American population through legislation and social structures like the reservations and boarding schools. Third, the Indian was a part of the American society, albeit a marginalized part. The entire assimilationist movement was an attempt to bring the Native American population closer to the American society. The goal of the boarding schools was to create an Indian citizen (Hoopes 1940) as an integral part of the American society. Native Americans "were being transformed from a people ... at the periphery of society to a people — albeit a disempowered people— in the core, (Biolsi 1995, 29)." By integrating the Native Americans into the political economy of the society, the mainstream culture would have access to the material resources and productive potential of the ethnic group. By exerting control over the identity and social mobility of the Indian, the society could also limit the potential dangers a non-disciplined group could pose to the established ideology and maintain the societal *status quo*. The Indian did not attain a previously established position within the socio-economic hierarchy of the society, but instead became a new, pariah level in the pyramid.

The federal boarding school has previously been identified as one of the major spaces where the ideological "disciplining" (Foucault 1980) of Native Americans took place (Lomawaima 1993). It is possible to blend Foucauldian analysis of the destruction of the already imaginary concept of the individual with Marger and Obermiller's argument about the construction of ethnic identity. One of the keys to understanding this line of thought is an acceptance of a public/private space in the environment<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup>This is a term used by Marger and Obermiller to describe the set of conditions under which interaction between the ethnic group being studied and the mainstream society take place. For the purposes of this discussion, the environment is the physical boarding school.



Marger and Obermiller feel that a residential and occupational concentration share a common function in the development of ethnic identity, the creation of ethnic enclaves.

A private space is necessary for the group to establish solidarity. This must be a place where the main cultural influence is not that of either the original aboriginal culture, nor that of the society, but one in which the new syncretic ethnicity organizes modes of cognition, which in turn serve to organize the ways in which actions are conceived (Margolis 1987, Lévi-Strauss 1973), can emerge. It need not be free from the control of society, but this control must assume a secondary position in relation to the new identity. At the boarding schools, the dormitories served this function.

The aim of this chapter has been to show how through modes of ideological and physical discipline, Native Americans were given an ethnic identity. The identity was intended to place them within the established social hierarchy of the society. The actions of the society were aimed at eradicating the individual in order to keep the societal systems of organization flowing. Rather than being representative of recognizable interest groups, an ideology is a self-perpetuating series of actions, whose purpose is to cause more actions of a similar nature. An individual is an imaginary concept given to members of the society in order to show potential motivations for actions. By accepting the ruling ideology, a person gives up the right to be an individual, loses her or his personal identity and becomes part of the larger system of organization (Rabinow 1980).

This form of macro-level approach is not entirely appropriate for the specifics of this situation. The ideological discipline could not completely eradicate notions of Native American individuality. The boarding schools did not function like a factory. Native American tribal members did not



enter the walls and emerge as unrecognizable Indians. There are no such absolutes in social science research. In his discussions of Malaysian peasant rebellion, James Scott has argued that within any ideological battleground, a term which surely applies to the boarding schools, there is resistance on the part of those being oppressed at some level. This resistance will be directed at the oppressors, and will be a class conscious rebellion, with an ideological base that recognizes the political situation in which the oppressed are involved. The actions of resistance need not be overt, or even recognized as resistance by those in power, but they must be recognizable by the oppressed. These actions form a "hidden transcript" within the text of the interactions of oppressed and oppressor (Scott 1990).

One can also turn to the writings of Gramsci in order to find reasoning for why the students in the boarding schools may not have been the ideological subjects that the government intended them to be. In Gramsci's discussions of hegemony, there are always counter-hegemonic forces at work, resisting the ideological burdens placed upon them. These pockets of resistance are organized against the system, which requires an understanding of the existing forces attempting to spread the ideological discourse (Gramsci 1971).

It is hard to believe that within the boarding schools, the students, whose age ranged from six years to roughly twenty years old (Shannon 1971) were aware of the ideological underpinnings of their actions. However, it is indisputable that acts of resistance to authority did occur within the schools (Lomawaima 1993, 1994, Shannon 1971). Instead of relating this to a level of ideological imagining, I prefer to view these acts of resistance as symbols of an emerging ethnicity among the students. This is not the ethnicity intended by the school's administrators, but one unique to the boarding schools.



This identity is a negotiated one, located between the realities of previous tribal life, and life within the larger society. For these students, there were multiple realities, each of which required different systems of meaning in order to be successfully negotiated (Geertz 1973, Douglas 1969, Lévi-Strauss 1966). There was the traditional identity which ordered their relations within their specific tribal contexts; there was an ideal Pan-Indian identity, constructed to order the ways in which Native Americans existed when in contact with mainstream society; there was an identity based on the interaction of members of tribal cultures with the larger society. The last was the identity exhibited by Native American students within the boarding schools. Like any ideological system, it was developed for a specific set of interactions, but over time, exhibited change as it came into contact with new ideas and power structures from the society.

According to Marger and Obermiller, there are several parts to the emergence of ethnic identity that lead to a discursive whole which serves to guide thought and actions. The cultural aspect of this process analyzes the reasons why people with different backgrounds tend to form communities that fulfill their social and psychological desire not to be excluded from the group. Often hybrid cultures are formed which are influenced by the backgrounds of the members of the new cultures. These hybrid cultures are regulated by an organizational structure developed within the individual ethnic groups.

During this process, perceptions play a large role in defining identity. The members of the society assign characteristics to the emerging ethnic group<sup>25</sup>. These characteristics are internalized by both groups, which leads to

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<sup>25</sup>Here, and elsewhere in the paper, the term society, unless defined in the nearby content of the text, stands for the dominant society, or the individuals subscribing to the guiding ideology put forth by the institutions of control. I feel that this is a valid use of the term. It raises all



the development of codes of behavior and thought specific to interactions between the society and the ethnic group. This action also occurs within the ethnic group. Both groups are dynamic, and these perceptions shift according to stimulus, both internal and external.

These perceptions are created out of interaction, and this interaction must occur in a place. This place, which Marger and Obermiller call the environment, has a set of conditions. Throughout the course of interaction between the society and the ethnic group, certain spheres are developed. There is a residential sphere, which is where the ethnic group develops its community, and which is relatively free from intrusion by the mainstream society. There is also a public sphere. In the public sphere, members of the ethnic group interact with the society. This is the area in which the actions that shape perceptions take place. This model can be visualized.



The central circle (colored in) represents the private sphere of the ethnic group. Everything outside of the outer circle represents the domain of society. The space between the two circles is the arena symbolic interactions take place that are shaped by, and in turn serve in shaping, the perceptions of the society and ethnic group<sup>26</sup>. Interactions within this sphere reify and reinforce the perceptions, and keep the cycle going

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interactions to a domain of power relations, but power is the central focus of this work, so the link fits in with the overall conceptual scheme.

<sup>26</sup> The lines between the spaces are not as solid as the model suggests. This is a conceptual model, and not a schematic diagram of the boarding school system. It might be better to think



Within the schools themselves, a type of ethnic solidarity emerged between the students. While not a strict ethnicity as defined above, this identity served to guide the students through their lives and provided the support groups necessary for marginalized social groups to survive oppression (Walsh 1986).

Lomawaima (1993) has shown convincingly how female students united together to defeat some of the measure of control forced upon them in the boarding schools. Her discussions of the ways in which students united to beat the schools' dress codes can be seen as analogous to James Scott's descriptions of symbolic cow killing in Malaysia (Scott 1985). However, I do not see these actions as acts of deliberate rebellion, but of solidarity when faced with a common oppressor. In Marger and Obermiller's terms, the interaction between students and administrators was not an ideological battle, but the collision of two ethnic groups<sup>27</sup>. This conflict creates solidarity, and a sense of unity among members of either group<sup>28</sup>.

This action was occurring within the walls of the schools. In the dormitories, the fields, and the classrooms, there was a degree of freedom for the students. Observation and discipline are never complete. There are stories of students staying up late at night and singing songs in their native languages (Shannon 1971). In order for groups of students to escape their

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of the lines as dotted, which would allow for passage through the categories. These spaces are real to the participants in the system, but are not tangible. Furthermore, members of the majority society have more freedom in negotiating between the spheres of influence, because they have power, whereas the actions of the members of the ethnic group are more limited, because they hold a marginalized social position.

<sup>27</sup>By this I mean that there was no guiding ideological force behind the actions of the students. An awareness of difference does not necessarily have the goal oriented foresight which guides true rebellions.

<sup>28</sup>The thoughts of administrators within these schools have not been studied, due to the obvious power discrepancy between their position and that of the students. However, it would be interesting to see how the actions of the students fostered feelings of solidarity between the administrators.



dress code by hiding their gray "bloomers" *en masse*, there had to be some communication hidden from the schools' administrators (Lomawaima 1993). Within the boarding schools, the students were able to establish their private space, which Marger and Obermiller view as imperative for the process of ethnic identity formation. While not necessarily permanent ethnic enclaves as the argument was intended, these spaces were real to the individuals involved.

These types of actions, spaces, and support groups allowed the students respite from the ideological pressures of the society. However, such activities were not free from danger. Each one of Lomawaima's informants recalls being caught by the members of the administration, and Shannon's piece is full of stories about punishments given to students for breaking the rules of the schools. Punishment and discipline, rather than removing an individual from the group, served to unite students against the administration.

This identity lessened the effectiveness of the ideological training of the schools. The student identity served as a reminder of life outside of the social system of the society. This can be viewed as either positive or negative. Students were able to separate themselves from the ideology of the society, and to retain a measure of their individuality and cultural heritage, real or imagined. However, this might have potentially made the transition into the society more difficult. Instead of becoming unthinking ideological subjects, Native American students entered the society with an awareness of their position *vis-a-vis* the rest of the society. This could have led to the conflict between Native American conceptions of self and society's understandings of the proper roles for Native Americans.

The outcome of the boarding school phenomenon was that Native American youths entered with a single ethnic identity and exited with three



overlapping ones. After the schooling, Native American youths retained, through their social groups, a sense of their personal traditional identity<sup>29</sup>, a negotiated student identity, and an identity for interaction with the larger society, Indianness. Of the three, the one that I feel is the most important for understanding Native American relations within American society is the second. This identity, started within the schools, continued with the students throughout the course of their lives. There were always polar ideological systems pulling on Native Americans, but the ability to place oneself within the often contradictory systems was the most important for surviving within the American social and cultural context. Instead of exiting as Indians, as was intended, Native Americans exited as members of a confused ethnic group, used to being pulled in several directions at once. It is this confusion, and the syncretic culture of traditional identity and notions of Indianness which comes through in the artwork and print literature produced by Native Americans during this time period.

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<sup>29</sup>It is impossible to know how much of this identity was similar to that which the student had upon entering the schools, and how much of it had undergone change, becoming a "commemorative" (Gillis 1994) or "imagined" (Anderson 1990) history.



## **Pictures as Commodities: Native American Art, Self Expression, and Consumer Goods**

### **Chapter II**

Unlike the European cultural worlds, Native American cultures did not traditionally separate art from life. Decoration, like religion, was a part of everyday life, and its meaning influenced the daily existence of members of many Native American cultures (Feest 1980). The symbols that adorned the objects of everyday life, from baskets to blankets, helped to orient members of various cultures and gave them a means of organizing their existence (Lévi-Strauss 1963). Many of their concepts of themselves, and of the world around them, can be observed through an examination of their physical culture specimens. It is through these objects that it is possible to observe how Native Americans' concepts of themselves changed over time. For the time period of this study, one can observe how the actions of the majority society affected Native American conceptions of the self in isolation from and role within mainstream American society.

Christian Feest has identified four periods within Native American art history: tribal, ethnic, Pan-Indian, and Indian mainstream art. It is the first three periods, and their boundaries, which have importance for this study<sup>30</sup>. Tribal art was created according to the cultural ideals of the tribe and was intended primarily for internal consumption. The images and decorations in

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<sup>30</sup>Indian mainstream art, is defined by Feest as being, "art...produced by artists who happen to be Indians, (Feest 80, 16)." This form of art did not emerge until after the period of this study. This is the reason that it will not be included in this discussion.



this genre reflect individual tribal notions of identity and are not influenced to any great extent by external sources. The wooden carvings and effigies of Northwest Coast tribes are an example of this type of art (Dockstader 1973).

Ethnic art is a consumer art. It was produced by members of Native American groups for the consumption of members of mainstream American society. Like any commodity, it is influenced by the desires of the consumer. Instead of reflecting solely the original identity of the producers' cultures, it is a syncretic art form composed of native images and mainstream conceptions of Indian imagery. An example of this type of art is the *Kachina* dolls produced by the Navajo of the Southwestern United States, which are sold at roadside stands and stacked along the shelves of tourist shops on the reservations. Pan-Indian art does not draw its influences from tribal cultures and customs. The producers of this art do not see themselves as members of a single tribe, but as members of an Indian ethnic group. This ethnic group is in part created by mainstream society, and this Pan-Indian identity is based largely on the desires of the majority culture. The result is an identity that does not have, to any great degree, a foundation in a single tribal or cultural unit, but combines many traditional cultures' aspects with external societal ideas and constraints. Pan-Indian art grew out of the same social forces that drove the development of ethnic art. The marked difference is in the means of production and the objects produced. Instead of producing variants of traditional tribal arts for consumers, Pan-Indian artists simply produced Indian art, or art which was uniquely Indian (Feest 1980). This motivation explains why it was possible to purchase feather headdresses, a Plains tribe form of ornamentation, on reservations in the Northeast.

The emergence of ethnic art forms and the acculturative practices of the federal boarding schools formed a two pronged attack on native



conceptions of identity. The school system served to separate individuals from their cultural backgrounds, while the marketization of Native American art served to break down cultural distinctiveness. The result was an identity that was nurtured through federal policies in the schools, and supported through economic factors.

Native American material culture artifacts allow social scientists a chance to see the ways in which Native Americans viewed themselves. Certain artifacts might not have been created for the consumption of tribal groups, but they still hold a symbolic place within the culture. Regardless of the intent of the creators of the artifacts, the use of the cultural symbols carries meaning. The types of representation in the artifacts still serve to proclaim group identity. The original purpose of the medium cannot be changed over short periods of time, depending on the whims of the capitalist market system.

In the preceding chapter, I proposed that members of tribal groups underwent forced acculturation within the federal boarding schools. As a result of these practices, these individuals formed a syncretic cultural identity, combining mainstream notions of Indian identity with traditional tribal customs and completely new, situational developments. This definition of the emergent identity is reminiscent of Feest's description of the new art forms developing at similar times. These simultaneous developments were not coincidental, nor was one the result of the other. Instead, each fed off of the other, and led to a phenomenon that was able to encompass the entire Native American community, and not simply the members of the tribal groups who were students within the federal boarding school system.

The communities themselves were undergoing rapid culture change. External notions of Native American identity were being internalized by



members of tribal groups, and the traditional cultural boundaries were being broken down through a process related to the appropriation of Native American symbols by the majority group. These symbols were changed in content, but not meaning, by the actions of the consumers of Native American material culture.

Objects which had traditionally served to represent tribal identity were slowly transformed into consumer items decorated with popular culture images. However, consciously or not, members of the tribal groups still looked to the traditional sources for justification of their place within the larger social universe. Instead of images of their traditional culture, they saw the new syncretic, Pan-Indian culture adorning their traditional symbols. This had the effect of legitimizing the society's claims about the nature of Native American culture and helped to shape Native Americans' concepts of their own identity. They began to internalize the new identity because it was being fed to them through the traditional outlets. Native American tribal identities began to change according to the whims of the market economy, which was an extension of the mainstream culture.

In order to survive in an increasingly capitalist system, Native American groups were forced to change their traditional material culture forms according to the desires of the society's consumers. At the same time, members of the tribal societies were forced to undergo rapid acculturation into the majority society. The result was a population of people with a societally conceptualized identity which was supported on the tribal level. In order to survive, Native Americans were forced to abandon their tribal affiliations and accept a role created for them by the society.

In the following section, I investigate the shift in meaning of a single type of art produced by a number of Native American tribes. The ways in



which this art form changed through contact is, I feel, representative of the changes that traditional art forms from many Native American tribal groups were experiencing. My analysis is based on Plains tribe ledger art. This type of art was chosen because, during its transformative process, many methods of state control, ideological, military, and economic, can be seen.

### **Native American Ledger Art**

According to Foucault, history is a device used to break down continuity<sup>31</sup>. It is a construction used to categorize individuals and groups in order to make them easier to discipline. It effectively removes individuals from their own pasts and isolates them. Individuals and groups cannot link their present situations with their own individual or group experiences (Foucault 1984). Linking this idea with Foucault's discussions of the subjectification of human beings, the creation of history is a dividing practice that gives individuals a social, personal, and temporal identity with which to negotiate the cultural specificity of their lives (Rabinow 1984, Foucault 1984).

The process of creating and spreading history has two major component parts, which I have labeled reflection, and identification. Identification deals with the action of creating a history.<sup>32</sup> There has been a great deal of recent scholarly interest in the creation of national celebratory monuments, whether ritual, imaginary, or physical in nature (Bodnar 1984, Savage 1994, Laquer 1994). These have been viewed as the actions of societies

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<sup>31</sup>History as a form of knowledge is also a discursive form of power. This is how "history" is intended in this case.

<sup>32</sup> The specifics of this process have been developed for Native Americans in the pre-1920 period and should not be taken as universal truths, although the mechanisms may be similar.



intent on creating a history in order to control more fully, or effectively discipline its subjects, and pass along "truth." In effect, these actions have been exercises in power (Foucault 1984).

The model of history, ritual, commemoration, identity, and power, developed to explain the growth of national cultures, is functional. Individuals want to be included in the history of the nation. If they are not parts of mainstream society, they form "ethnic" groups that attempt to show their importance to the nation by participating in identity-forming rituals, "commemorating" their (collective) importance to the society, whereby they can enjoy increased social status and all of the benefits of membership of the elite mainstream. "Designated ethnic celebrations provide forums for such groups to display colorful proof that they have contributed to the national foundation, (Williams 1988, 435)." However, the boundaries between ethnic groups never disappear; the divisions remain but they have been made invisible. The minority ethnic groups, previously openly excluded from the power gaming of mainstream society, have been subsumed; they have given up their collective power, a potential entity, to the state, which reproduces it and uses it (the power) to reinforce its (the state's) own ideological system. The ethnic groups, which can be termed minority groups since they are being subjected by the power mechanisms of mainstream society, eagerly accept the new forms of domination, since they have become part of the ideological system by linking their own history with that of the state. They have removed themselves from their own past in order to become part of the state, and by doing so have made themselves completely dependent on the state's ideological system for ordering their individual lives, since they have been separated from their own cultural past (Williams 1988).



This theoretical model is broad enough to apply to many cultural contexts, and appears to work well on the macro level. However, I do not feel that it works for the Native American situation, particularly for the construction of history and commemorative ritual among the Plains tribes. It ignores the specifics of the situation. Foucault's notions of the role of history fit with the past (I avoid the use of the word history at this point) facts of state interaction, but the creation of ritual activity that I analyze does not work with William's argument. This argument is essentially colonialist, insinuating that all types of ritual historical activity occur in relation to the state, with the purpose of aligning ethnic groups within the established social hierarchy of the society. This state-centered argument is European in nature, and should not be applied cross culturally, especially when dealing with periods other than the contemporary. Ritual activity intended to strengthen ties between members of a community is overlooked by this model. Solidarity is assumed under the pretext of societal power relations.

The long and the short of this verbose introduction is that a form of commemorative ritual activity was used by some Native American groups prior to the administration of direct state control on these individuals. Over time, this activity was influenced by actions of the state and its peripheral organizations. By this later point the ritual came into use as a means of creating a history that was used in a Foucauldian "power/knowledge" means of control (Foucault 1984). However, this activity was not originally an attempt by a recognizable social group in order to gain recognition and a place within a societal matrix. In practice, the means by which a history was created appears to fit with Williams' model for group ritual celebration, but in theory, they are worlds apart. The scholars dealing with commemorative rituals (Piehler 1994, Koshar 1994, Laquer 1994, Cressy 1994, Savage 1994) see



the individual as a player, a faceless subject. I see individual actions as motivators. This difference, while logistically minor, in terms of the specific actions, is semiotically important. It changes the power relations of the events, and changes the role of the society, and its extension, the state. According to one model, the state is an entity appealed to for acceptance, and to the other, an entity which seeks to control in order to preserve its own power. When the monolith of the state is broken down, its construction becomes evident.

This assertion, which seems to be a strong contrast to the Foucauldian argument which I have constructed, is actually an attempt on my part at clarifying some of the dark spots in Foucault's state systems. At some level, there has to be an introduction of original thought into the system, otherwise there would be no need for the disciplining forces to be in operation. This type of original thought does not come from within the society. Members of the society have already been strictly disciplined. The original thought comes from the society's periphery. For Foucault, the prison was developed to control the deviants and criminals, whose concepts of self differed from that of the society. For me, the boarding schools and similar institutions were created to take care of Native Americans, whose symbolic role was similar to that of French criminals. As a result of original actions and thoughts by members of this periphery, the societal institutions create systems of control in order to discipline in attempt to maintain the *status quo*. My argument attempts to clarify the means by which the nebulous systems which Foucault discusses come into existence.

The commemorative ritual activity which I refer to is widely known as ledger art. It was a type of pictorial figural representation utilized primarily by Native American tribes in the Plains regions of the contemporary United



States. In order to link this form of activity to the previous argument, and to show that ledger art reflected Native American notions of self, society, and state, an introduction to the genre, including its history and changes, is needed.

### **The History of Ledger Art**

The production of works classified by contemporary American society as art was, in Native American Plains tribes in the period of this study, divided on the basis of biological sex. Women's art forms were primarily linked to the material needs of the group. In short, the forms of art created by women in the Plains societies were mostly done on material goods media, i.e. on baskets. The forms of decoration were almost exclusively geometric in nature. Pictorial representation, human or otherwise, was the domain of men in these societies (Feest 1980, Highwater 1986, Szabo 1994, Young 1986).

There were two main forms of pictorial representation in Plains societies. The first was symbolic representation, where the images were symbols of supernatural power. They were the physical embodiments of cultural beliefs, and contained or harnessed the essence of these powers (Leach 1976). These images were highly personalized; the only individuals able to create these images were those men who had undergone quests and received visions. The symbols reflected only the specific vision of the owner. He had exclusive possession of the supernatural power manifested by the symbol (Szabo 1994). The power of the symbol came not from a group understanding of the symbol itself, but rather from a recognition of the meaning of a symbol, and by the exclusivity (Kertzer 1988). Surfaces



commonly covered by these works included drums and shields. A warrior, seeing the image on the shield of an enemy, might not know the exact meaning of the painting, but would recognize that the owner of the shield had managed to gain personal possession of the forces needed to create such a symbol.

The other use of pictorial art had a wider audience able to understand the meaning of the works, as well as a wider group of artists able to create them. Representational art grew out of the pictographic tradition (Feest 1980, Szabo 1994, Young 1986). This tradition was a system of communication in which meaning, a message, was conveyed through visual imagery. This system of communication was used by many Native American groups, and was not restricted to the Plains region. The system allowed Native Americans to break down language barriers in order to aid communication. This system of communication had no established rules that have survived,<sup>33</sup> however, it was widely used. The figures used in the art developed from this source were not intended, like symbolic art, to hide the meaning, while the viewer understood the message in another manner. Rather, the figures used in representational painting were intended to convey the proper message to the viewer of the work.

It is important for the reader of this work to understand that there were two ways which representational painting was used among Plains tribes in the period directly preceding the period of this study, approximately 1800-1870. Both of these uses must be taken into consideration when the genre of ledger art is examined as a commemorative art form used to signify history and identity. Representational painting was used as a calendric recording and as a heraldic record (Szabo 1994).

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<sup>33</sup> That I have encountered during the course of my research.



The tribes in which pictorial calendars had the greatest importance were the Sioux and the Kiowa. These calendars were painted on buffalo hides, by the official tribal historian. The tribal historian was a male chosen because of his talents of observation, objectivity, and artistic skill. It was important that the images could be easily recognized and understood by all members of tribe. The appearance of the calendars varied, with the images arranged linearly, spirally, or in a serpentine pattern. Depending on the tribe, either one image per year (Sioux) or two images per year (Kiowa) were painted on the calendar. The images were representative of not only what the historian felt was important, but also what the tribe viewed as important. The members of the tribe voted whether or not to accept each image as representative of the official past of the tribe (Szabo 1994)<sup>34</sup>. In effect, the calendar served as a commemorative monument in which the tribe officially created its history and the way in which the past would be officially represented. Their past, their "collective memory" (Gillis 1994), and therefore their identity was embedded in the images on the buffalo skin calendars. These calendars were brought out for members of the community to view and to re-impart in the minds of individuals at important tribal rituals (Szabo 1994).

The other use of representational painting was as an autobiographical record. The representation of personal actions was, like other forms of representational painting, a strictly male activity. These autobiographical records were originally painted on buffalo hides, which were the personal possession of individual warriors. This representation was a type of societal reward for brave actions. By showing his hide, a warrior could boast of his

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<sup>34</sup> The literature on the subject does not state whether men and women took part in this process of selection, however, based on the exclusively male nature of the medium, I assume that only the male members of the tribe took part in these discussions.



accomplishments and show his status to other members of the tribe. It was a visual means of representing status (Szabo 1994). Unlike the calendars, which consisted of single figures or individual actions in compositions specific to the individual works, the heraldic paintings had multiple elements and a standard form.

These works showed the status of the warriors who owned them. As a result, it was essential that the images be easily understood by viewers.

Clarity and consistency of design were the central concerns of the artists of these works.<sup>35</sup> In the pre-reservation period, the scenes most often pictured featured battles and hunts. In the battle scenes, the action was always featured from the central actor's right. In other words, the tribe to which the owner of the robe belonged was always on the right side of a vignette, and the enemy was always featured on the left (Szabo 1994). This stylistic convention increased the clarity of the images.

The scenes pictured were frequently complex. Numerous human figures were portrayed, as well as the forms of animals like horses and buffalo. In order to maintain clarity, the artists emphasized the line to demarcate space. In other words, figures were composed of blocks of color. Each block, or collections of blocks, was bordered by thick lines. There was no blending of figures, which could confuse a viewer. Rather, the apparent blockiness of the works was a conscious attempt by the artists of the genre to increase clarity, in order to achieve the purpose of the work (Szabo 1994). This purpose was to detail the events in the life of a single warrior.

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<sup>35</sup> Unlike the symbolic images, which had to be created by the warrior who experienced a vision, the heraldic paintings did not need to be completed by the warrior whose exploits were featured. Since clarity was an important feature, individual artists often created these biographies for others (Szabo 1994, Young 1986). This consolidation of labor led to a unified style, at least within individual tribal groups.



These were public art forms, intended to be seen by the members of the tribe in order to show the significance of the owner. They helped to shape public opinion of the wearer and to influence the tribe's conceptions of history; they were often the only ways in which the tribe as a whole received news of an event. Prior to returning home from a raid or battle, victorious warriors would paint their hides, so that upon their return to the village, the tribe would see the warrior's deeds recounted.

"Heraldic paintings were, then, public art forms intended to be visible outward signs of the accomplishments of the owner. Like other forms of Plains art, heraldic painting was inextricably woven into the everyday existence of Plains people... Calendric records, and to a large extent heraldic paintings, provided a guarantee of historic continuity. (Szabo 1994, 13)"

This link to a history is a tenuous one. By uniting contemporary events with the past, through painting, Plains tribes linked actions with memories. Their notions of the past, and their interpretations of the present were colored by this linkage. The symbolic action of placing figures on canvas linked periods of history, whether personal or tribal that may not, in fact, have been the products of similar social conditions. History is layered, with each period comprised of specific conditions, social, political, and economic. Past events are not to be understood in terms of contemporary social conditions. Doing so changes the perceived reality of the past, and serves to destroy the individual and tie him into the society by linking him with events which, may or may not have had any direct link to the individual (Foucault 1984). Plains tribes created a sense of historic continuity, which strengthened their tribe, or society, but at the cost of forcing the individual to be a part of the society's past in order to do so. By linking the individual with the tribal history, the individual was subsumed by the society.



Social pressure was the force that drove this acceptance of domination. In order to gain prestige in Plains society, a male had to be a brave warrior.<sup>36</sup> This forced males to take part in battles, to challenge enemies face to face, and to attempt to count coup. However, the actions did not earn prestige for the warrior. Acknowledgment of the actions by the society earned the reward. In order to gain the acknowledgment, a warrior had to make his deeds known to the members of his tribe. One of the ways to do so was by creating autobiographical painting records. Thus, to gain societal status, a male could link himself with the established societal tradition, and give himself up to the ritual. In order to gain individual power, one had to give up one's individuality and accept a type of societal domination.

### **The Reservation Period**

Following the move to the reservation, the form and role of representational painting changed dramatically. In the decade immediately preceding the major move to the reservations which occurred in around 1870, there were changes in the lifestyles of the Plains tribes. Most importantly, the buffalo herds, one of the major food sources, were decimated. One of the results, but by no means the most important, was that buffalo hides were no longer as readily available as surfaces on which to paint. From the pre-reservation period through the early reservation years, approximately 1900, Plains tribes became increasingly dependent on Whites for certain material goods. This was not a new phenomenon, nor has it been

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<sup>36</sup> This is a generalization. There were other ways to gain prestige, and other social roles that males could take. However, this was the most common route taken.



overlooked in contemporary colonialist theory (Césaire 1972). However, these actions had certain repercussions for this discussion.

New materials became available to Native American artists. Western dyes allowed for new colors, and European brushes and pencils changed the ways in which traditional paintings were produced. Paper became available in large quantities, and this began to replace the scarce buffalo hides, although as Szabo notes, there was not a wholesale exchange of media. Additionally, buffalo hides began to lose their importance as status symbols. Trader's blankets became symbols of prestige among Plains tribes, and the buffalo hides lost their place as outward symbols of prestige. However, "the Plains artist was still the public figure creating representations on small pieces of paper as records of his brave deeds, or those of his friends, (Szabo 1994, 15)."

The increased leisure time forced upon Native Americans by the move to the reservations further spread the production of what were, by this time, primarily, ledger paintings. The portability of paper, in conjunction with the factors mentioned above, made it the most popular medium for expression. Native American males during the reservation period had few available outlets for their energy. Many of their traditional activities, most notably warfare and hunting, had been severely curbed, if not outlawed by the federal government. The tribes were dependent on the government agents for their material needs, and had little to do while waiting for their shipments of supplies from the government. Art provided an outlet for the frustration of Native American males at this time. This was the first period when Native American males from the Plains tribes specialized as artists (Young 1986, Szabo 1994).

During the reservation period, there were motivating factors for Native American males to be artists. Anthropologists, soldiers, and tourists



all were willing to pay for works of ledger art. As Loretta Fowler has shown in her analysis of period Gros Ventre reservation life, economic success was a way of gaining prestige in the normless days of the early reservation years (Fowler 1987). Native American males were able to gain tribal status by taking part in a traditional activity. They did not have to remove themselves from their cultural context, or their personal and social identity in order to maintain their societal position.

Federal actions also encouraged Native American males to create ledger paintings. While the period which featured the zenith of ledger art production was before the major surge in assimilationist federal policies, at least one example shows how government intervention directly contributed to the production of ledger art. In order to keep the tribes on the reservations, and to maintain peace on the reservations, it was the policy of the federal government to send leaders of newly "reservationed" tribes to federal prisons located in the eastern states. Seventy-two such prisoners were interred at Fort Marion, located at St. Augustine, Florida between 1875 and 1878. The commander of the fort was then Lieutenant Richard H. Pratt.

Pratt attempted to "civilize" his charges. He forced them to engage in physical labor, instilled in them military organization and discipline, and taught them to read and to write English. In addition to dressing them in government issue clothing, Pratt encouraged their creativity as an attempt to remove the "savage" from the Indians. He allowed the prisoners contact with the citizens of the town, and encouraged them to earn money by producing tourist goods. "The confined warriors polished sea beans, made paper toys, and fashioned canes, bows, and arrows. Among the most popular collectibles were the warriors' colorful drawings available for approximately two dollars per book, (Szabo 1994, 67)." The most prolific artists were the



Kiowa and Cheyenne captives. These tribes had a tradition of representational art, which the captives drew upon in order to produce their images (Szabo 1994).

In their artwork, the Fort Marion prisoners blended the traditional art form with new cultural influences. They portrayed the traditional battle scenes, but they also painted images of railroads, cities, and harbors. They painted themselves learning to read while dressed in the uniforms they were forced to wear (Szabo 1994, 54). The audience for the works purchased them not solely for the subject matter but because of the identity of the artists as well. There were no constraints that forced them to maintain traditional motifs<sup>37</sup>. In fact, if the function of ledger art was maintained, namely the creation of autobiographical records, then the prevalence of non-traditional activities has great importance in questions regarding Native American identity during the time period.

### *The Degikup Debacle*

The individual came first, which is precisely the concept that I was dealing with at the end of the last chapter. A sense of the self as separate from the tribe was developing, and of the self as an Indian, a category within the societal matrix. By placing themselves ahead of the tribe, these artists showed that they had internalized the societal concepts of self-improvement, and had divorced themselves from notions of the tribe that kept them from uniting with the society. By becoming market capitalists, they shared in the ideological community of the nation, and not that of their native tribes.

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<sup>37</sup> This is speculation on my part. I have found no evidence either to support or refute this conclusion.



This discussion is similar to Marvin Cohodas's investigation of the forces that created the aesthetic style of Washoe basketry during the end of the period of this study. "Washoe fancy basketry is a twentieth-century "art of acculturation"... promoted by collectors and dealers of Indian curios, it evolved rapidly to meet the demands of the marketplace (Cohodas 1986, 206)." Instead of government patronage, if the actions of Pratt can be called patronage, the Washoe women involved in the production of consumer basketry relied on the support of a single patron. This patron was the sole link to the market economy for these artists. As a result, they had less creative freedom, because they had to tailor their works to suit the tastes of a single patron<sup>38</sup>.

While the consumer popularity of ledger art can be related to a "school" of artists, the Fort Marion Prisoners, the Washoe basket genre can be related to the work of a single artist, Louisa Keyser, or Dat So La Lee, and her patron. Through the marketing expertise of her patron, Abe Cohn, Keyser altered the style of Washoe Basketry and created a commercial genre. Her signature style "was the *degikup*, a fabric sculpture without utilitarian function and without precedent in traditional Washoe basket weaving, (Cohodas 1986, 207)." Her baskets became, "a high quality and economically viable curio ware by 1910, (Cohodas 1986, 207)." In fact, her baskets became the standard consumer basket, and in order to survive financially, other artists were forced to copy her "flamboyant designs (207)."

In a strange example of a created history, Amy Cohn, wife of Keyser's patron, imagined a tradition into which Keyser's baskets fell. In order to appeal to consumers' the baskets had to be "ethnic," and thus needed a tribal

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<sup>38</sup>At the same time, this patron had to have an awareness of what consumers were interested in purchasing, which slightly alters the relationship between personal taste and artistic production.



function. Since there was no true relation between the *degikup*, and Washoe tradition, Amy Cohn created one, claiming the design "was a traditional mortuary basket (208)." She developed stronger links to the Paiute tribe, claiming that the group forbade women from creating this type of basket, and that only the patronage of individuals like the Cohn's allowed the artists to create the basket forms.

While this does not create for Native Americans a link to the tribal past in the same manner as ledger art, the lack of Native American response is significant. Had there been a strong concept of tribal unity, there would have been a response on the part of the Paiute tribe to this accusation. Keyser was still a member of the Washoe tribe, which meant that she maintained relations with the Paiutes. It is certain that this information, or misinformation, eventually slipped out, and became widespread knowledge<sup>39</sup>. Keyser, and other Native American artists aware of this action by Cohn, showed a stronger sense of self-preservation than allegiance to the tribe.

This chapter attempts to show how Native Americans pulled away from their tribal traditions and affiliations by entering into the capitalist economy of American society. The most dramatic example of this withdrawal and transformation occurred in what would be classified by American society as art. Most Native American cultures did not draw the same distinctions between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic that European cultures did. For the most part, what came to be classified as art was a central part of life, interconnected with core concepts of tribal identity. Therefore, changes within artistic forms had important repercussions for Native

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<sup>39</sup>If Keyser herself did not make this known, other artists with whom she competed would have known and objected to it if their concept of tribal unity was stronger than their sense of self preservation.



American concepts of tribe and self. The period of this study contained many changes within the art produced by Native Americans. Due to changes in the social environment, important works of art underwent dramatic shifts in form and function. Works of art which had previously been used to express personal and tribal identity, like representational painting were produced in different ways from how they had been produced in the past. This led to a resultant shift in the meaning contained within the works.

As a result of the economic pressures placed upon them by the society, Native American artists, in itself a new concept, changed their works in order to survive in a changing social world. In order to sustain themselves as artists, they were forced to adapt their art to suit its purchasers. While this is not a new phenomenon to students of European art history, which is filled with stories of tension between artists and patrons, it has different meaning for Native American cultures. The works of art were important symbols of tribal and personal identity and history, and their adaptation or loss left the tribes in a potential state of *anomie*. The traditional symbols were gone, or at least changed.

At the same time, the aggressive assimilationist policy of the federal government was in action. I contend that the ideology pushed forth by the government at this time helped to fill the void within Native American society. This is a strong statement, but the concept behind it is not nearly as absolute. I am not suggesting that Native Americans were left tribeless, nor do I contend that they accepted the ideology of American society with open arms. However, I posit that there was an acceptance, at some level, of the concepts pushed by the government and its related social systems. The result of these actions was a splintering of identity affiliations held by Native Americans. There existed a sense of the prior tribe-based identity, an



understanding of the identity pushed by the society, and a new syncretic identity merging aspects of these two poles, which Native Americans used to guide their actions and daily lives. My justification for this point of view is this: Both an identity that was completely based on tribal history and one based on the dominant society's assimilationist ideology lack the freedom necessary for survival in a complex social world. However, these two influences, in concert with personal experience and daily interaction with society combine to form a new identity, that of the Indian. It was this identity that Native Americans came to accept and to express.



## Chapter III

### Native Voices: An Analysis of Native American Print Literature

The late Nineteenth century showed a marked increase in the popular culture media, particularly print media, available for, and in some cases, produced by Native Americans. In 1835, the first printing press arrived on Indian territory lands, allowing Native American's access to the tools of the mass media. The *Cherokee Phoenix* was the first English language newspaper produced by a tribal group.<sup>40</sup> Newspapers and other periodicals were marketed for and produced by Native Americans living on reservations and within Federal Indian Schools. Within the Cherokee Nation, located in Indian Territory, Oklahoma, there were 116 independent newspapers in print between the years 1835 and 1907 (Foreman 1936, xxv).

The production of newspapers and periodicals by Native American groups was encouraged by the government. These periodicals were seen as parts of white civilization, and their production was seen as acceptance, by Native American groups, of the culture of mainstream society. In the words of Leo E. Bennett, Indian Agent in the Oklahoma Territory in 1899,

The news journals of this agency have assumed an important and potent position in the dissemination of advanced ideas. They are regarded as one of the most valuable aids... in the civilization... now being accomplished in the territory... The newspapers are developing the thinking, reasoning facilities of the people to act for themselves, and their influence is evidenced

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<sup>40</sup>The Cherokee language was one of the first to be translated into Roman characters. This occurred in 1820 (Foreman 1936, xxi).



day by day in the widening of the breach between old customs and the new life (quoted in Foreman 1936, xxi)."

In addition to speeding Native Americans along the path to civilization, newspapers provided Native Americans with access to information. They allowed members of the reservation communities to read about the events of their native communities, and the rest of the nation. By providing information, the newspapers also helped to shape the thoughts of readers. As Indian Agent Robert L. Owen stated, "The newspapers...have an educational value not to be ignored...(They) are beginning to play an important role in shaping public opinion (Foreman 1936, xxi)."

Unlike earlier periods, where the majority of literature marketed for Native Americans was missionary in nature, many of these sources were written and edited by Native Americans, and organized with the major social issues confronting Native Americans in mind. This section of the paper will analyze how the social issues confronting Native Americans were presented, and how these arguments served to advance or counter attempts by the mainstream society to categorize Native Americans, or to create for them a specific socio-cultural identity within the larger society.

In order to examine this issue fully, it is first necessary to break down the categories of analysis, and examine the possible function of each piece of information within the cultural equation.<sup>41</sup> For the purposes of this study, I tried to advance the idea that each periodical served one of two broad purposes. The function of each periodical was either to support the ideology of the mainstream society or to support a Native American ideological base.

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<sup>41</sup> While this sounds somewhat elementary and linear, i.e. Two part politics + One part identity X socio-economic status = culture, it is simply a way of visualizing the various aspects of group identity that together form a cultural whole.



A periodical acting in the first role functions as a hegemonic tool of the powerful of the society. Its purpose is to guide subtly the actions of the members of the society, in order to reinforce the power of the rulers of the society. The information in this type of periodical would support the *status quo*, and would not propose any type of action that would directly contradict or challenge the policies of the ruling group. The second type of periodical is by default, counter-hegemonic, because it posits an ideology that is in conflict with the majority. Any periodical which challenges the ideas of the mainstream culture, which is a creation and an extension of those in power in the society falls within the second category.

This approach is a basic one that overlooks the various levels of meaning located within any text. Additionally, it overlooks the social climate in which the work was created, and the political and economic forces which acted upon the creators of the periodicals. However, I needed a place to begin my research. This polar division gave me that starting point, and allowed me to begin to sift through the information provided within the works. Also, it allowed me to view the works in a standard manner, and freed me from making a theoretical judgment based on factors external to the text. Had I first looked at the ways in which the works were created, instead of their actual contents, in order to categorize them, my data would have to be interpreted differently. This method seemed to be the least troublesome, both from a practical and a theoretical point of view.

In the end, I realized that the categories that I had created to guide my research were not as concrete as I had originally thought. The assimilationist ideology, which guided all of the social transformations that I have been studying, permeated all of the periodicals that I examined. In effect, all of the periodicals in my study had hegemonic aspects; Foucault would have been



proud, and Gramsci devastated! In the end, I decided to let the articles speak for themselves, and the results were interesting, reflecting the assimilationist discourse of the society.

I had originally intended to examine how these periodicals acted as propaganda sources, influencing thought and guiding the actions of the readers. However, this proved troublesome.<sup>42</sup> My major point is how these works were intended to be viewed by the producers of the discursive media. The determination of this intent was less problematic given the data to which I had access. In short, these media sources show the ideological beliefs held by some Native Americans at the time period, and what their intentions were in publishing the periodicals. Secondly, this shows the beliefs of some of the readers of the media sources; otherwise, the periodicals would not have been published.

The first publication that I shall discuss is *The American Indian Magazine*. Published quarterly, this periodical was the journal of the Society of American Indians<sup>43</sup>. A professional publication, this journal interspersed black and white art plates with the text. It also utilized numerous typographic styles, including, on the title page, bold, italic, and different sized print. At first glance, the *American Indian Magazine* appears to be a work that was expensive to produce.

While this observation may seem elementary at first, it indicates much about the production and producers of the magazine. First, the editors of the

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<sup>42</sup>I could find few definite facts regarding the role of these periodicals within Native American groups during the time period of the study.

<sup>43</sup>The first volume of this journal was published in 1912. I had access to only four volumes of the text, 1914, 1916-1919. I have no information regarding the life of the magazine past these dates. The journal was published in Cooperstown, New York, but its editorial offices were located in Washington, D.C. This central position, in terms of legislation and policy making institutions, is interesting, and raises questions about the nature of the magazine which I cannot currently answer fully.



magazine had access to professional typesetting equipment. Second, they had enough capital to pay not only for the use of this equipment, but for typesetters trained in its use. Third, their use of plates of art in the nation's major collections shows an understanding of the "highbrow" culture of the larger society that one might not expect to find in a magazine of this type<sup>44</sup>. The magazine's appearance is not consistent with the image of Native Americans that one would expect to find during the final years of this study.

Without further investigation into the actual producers of *The American Indian Magazine*, this reaction is not entirely unanticipated. The latter part of my period of study was marked by an increased awareness on the part of American society about the plight of Native Americans. It was during the late 1910's that primarily white Indian activist societies began to gain public attention<sup>45</sup>. These groups often attempted to influence the public policy makers of the period, in efforts to aid Native American tribal groups. The lobbying actions by these groups were not without effect. Pressures by these groups influenced state congressional votes on at least one occasion (*American Indian Life* 1925 1, 1)<sup>46</sup>. These groups published their own journals and newsletters, and one could reasonably expect that individuals with enough time to function as activists during this period would have time and material wealth enough to be a part of the higher levels of society.

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<sup>44</sup>The page facing the title page of the first issue of the *American Indian Magazine* that I examined, vol. 4 no. 1, January-March 1916, featured the statue "Her Son," done by artist Nellie Walker. The piece was held by the Chicago Art Institute. The use of this image, aside from deeper questions about its purpose, intent, or meaning, shows a certain "sophistication" on the part of the editors of the magazine.

<sup>45</sup>These groups included the Indian Rights Association, the National Indian Association, and the appropriately named, Friends of the Florida Indians (Parker 1916, 42).

<sup>46</sup>In this incident, members of the American Indian Defense Organization lobbied in the Wisconsin legislature to stop the "unfair allotment of reservation lands (*American Indian Life* 1925 1, 2)."



This interest was not entirely new. In competition with the dime novels was a genre of literature sympathetic to the plight of Native Americans. The most famous example of this type of work was Ramona: A Story, by Helen Hunt Jackson. First published in 1884, this work was a bestseller for many years. A work of fiction, Ramona provided a different view of Native Americans than that generally proposed by the assimilationist ideology society.

*The American Indian Magazine* was not a newsletter of an activist society. It was not edited by members of the white majority. On the contrary, every member of the editorial board was Native American<sup>47</sup>. This fact was alluded to in the editorials within the magazine, and was spelled out within the descriptions of the editors on the table of contents of each issue.

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<sup>47</sup>The society itself was started by Fayette MacKenzie, a sociologist who wanted to help the Native Americans retain a measure of their identity (Hoxie 1984).





(taken from, *The American Indian Magazine* 1917: 5 (1) 4)

The caption for this image read, "Two Efficient Officers of the Society of American Indians: Miss Margaret Frazier, (Sioux), Vice-President on Membership, and Miss Gertrude Bonnin, Zitkala-Sa, (Sioux), Secretary of the Society, (*The American Indian Magazine* 1917: 5 (1) 4)."

An assumption that this periodical was a Native American one would nonetheless be misleading. The statement of purpose of the magazine answers questions regarding the periodical's appearance.

"The Society of American Indians, as a national organization of Americans, affords all Americans an opportunity for a high and unselfish form of patriotism.

"To the *Indian American* it gives the opportunity... to carry out a series of high principles that look to the advancement of the *race* in American enlightenment...To the white American, it gives the ... opportunity to do something



for the native race of America in a manner that will bring real results. To awaken the pride of a *people* to spur ambition and to point out the road to self-support, is greater work than seeking to crush racial spirit and to promote paternalism.

"The Society needs a large membership of persons of *Indian Blood* in order to secure a representative expression of the thoughts and ideal of the *race*; it needs... white Americans to stand as staunch supporters (Parker 1916: 2, 1 emphasis mine)."

These statements alone provide material for a lengthy discussion of Native American identity, societal position, and political outlook. However, the first issue is to understand how the magazine operated. My interpretation of the cited statements is that the editors of the magazine, most importantly Arthur C. Parker, the Editor-General, were looking for two types of members for the Society of American Indians. Native Americans were needed in order to bolster the cause numerically, and to provide input supporting the ideological aims of the editors. These individuals were needed to write articles for the magazine, in order to support the notion that the Society was in line with the ideals of contemporary Native Americans<sup>48</sup>. White members were needed to bankroll the publication, and to facilitate its entrance into majority society. This is purely speculation on my part, however, it is based on the following arguments. White members of the society could have no overt control over the decisions of the editorial board, but, as I intend to prove, the ideological bent of the magazine was in line with that of the majority American society. I reconcile this disparity by theorizing that pressures by the economic supporters of the magazine (whites) required that it show a certain ideological point-of-view in line with their own. The editors of the magazine would be inclined to go along with this coercion for two reasons. First, it would get their magazine published. Second, having

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<sup>48</sup>Native American contributors to the magazine were identified by tribe, in both the table of contents of each issue, and the by-line of each article. Any reader would be able to recognize which articles were written by members of Native American tribes, and were therefore representative of the ideals of the "race."



white supporters would insure that the readership of the magazine could permeate the whole of society, and not simply the marginal position held by Native Americans. Given time, a magazine that overtly supported the systems currently in power could create a counter-hegemonic discourse capable of shaping knowledge, and therefore exerting power over members of the entire society<sup>49</sup>.

The key to understanding this argument lies in an investigation of primary source data. By looking at the contents of the issues of this magazine, the theoretical arguments (insinuations) that I have made about its production and content gain some support. My thesis for these periodicals is that they show evidence of the types of ideological messages that were forced on Native Americans through hegemonic control systems like the boarding schools. Assimilationist rhetoric, mainstream values, and conceptions of Indian identity, both racial and social, appear in large numbers throughout these print sources<sup>50</sup>. The magazines discussed were influenced, at some point in their production by the systems of mainstream society. This shows a permeation of hegemonic ideas, those which support the current societal power structure at the expense of other groups within the society, within a context not overtly linked to the institutions of societal power.

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<sup>49</sup>This is a huge theoretical argument that lacks any substantive support. Due to the nature of this project, I lack the ability to fully support the claims that I have made. Because the project is entirely historical, I cannot conduct ethnographic fieldwork with the individuals being discussed in order to find their motivations. Additionally, I lack the resources necessary to conduct a full investigation into this or any other periodical that I discuss. Therefore, it is up to the reader of this work to either accept or not accept my theories and conclusions.

<sup>50</sup>The term "mainstream values" is an empty one. For this discussion, it refers to the large scale societal myths about success in the American cultural setting. One of these myths is the "American Dream," where all individuals can succeed given enough hard work and desire, regardless of the social conditions which they must negotiate. Another is the "American Melting Pot" idea, which states that race and ethnic heritage do not matter in the United States, and that all individuals are treated equally and fairly within American society.



The statement of purpose of the *American Indian Magazine* is a clear example of this phenomenon. The opening sentence, "The Society of American Indians, as a national organization of Americans, (Parker 1916: 2, 1)" illustrates one of my major points. There was a clear attempt to break down the concept of Indians as non-Americans. The message sent was that The Society of American Indians was not about a splinter group on the periphery of society, but was instead about an integral part of the American social matrix. Indians, as far as the editors of the magazine were concerned, were Americans. They had accepted the assimilationist rhetoric which had placed them, as Native Americans, within the social matrix of society. Their own expression of an American identity shows the degree to which this concept was accepted and internalized by subjects of societal hegemony.<sup>51</sup>

"To the Indian American it gives the opportunity... to carry out a series of high principles that look to the advancement of the race... (Parker 1916: 2, 1)" The use of the term Indian American shows that there was a concept, at least among some Native American groups, of themselves as American. They were not American Indians, which would imply a sense of ownership by the society, but were Indian Americans, which switches the concept, and labels the individual as the holder of something tangible, American identity. In addition to this, there is a concept of an Indian race. This racial identification is the result of actions on the part of the American government aimed at breaking down tribal and cultural distinctiveness. Prior to the application of government power upon tribal groups, there was no

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<sup>51</sup>As previously discussed, the degree to which the producers of this discursive medium were free from dependence on institutions of social power is unclear. However, at some level, there was a choice made whether to create the magazine or not. This choice had political implications, and the ramifications of this choice, and the messages sent by the magazine show an acceptance of the belief structure of the society, or at least a willingness to spread the ideological discourse!



indigenous sense of a Pan-Indian race. In fact, tribal identifications were seen as real enough boundaries for widespread massacres<sup>52</sup>. Loretta Fowler's work with the Gros Ventre tribe of Montana highlighted cross-tribal prejudices that could be considered racist. Deeply held cultural convictions between the Assinibone and the Gros Ventre created prejudices whose effect on the actions of members of the groups were as real as contemporary racial theory is on members of mainstream society (Fowler 1987).

In the same section, there is a call for white Americans to "do something for the native race of America... To awaken the pride of a people ... is greater work than seeking to crush racial spirit... (Parker 1916: 2, 1)." It appears as though one of the aims of the boarding schools was realized, the creation of a cultural monolith of Indianness. Not only had the categories been created and accepted by the society, but the choice of words used by the editors' of this periodical create the appearance that some members of the new cultural group had accepted their reality as well. In addition, there were cultural myths springing up to justify the reality of the contemporary social situation. Recent scholars have pointed out the importance of myth making in identity politics, and the reifying effect that these myths have on the "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983, Cressy 1994, Gillis 1994, Lebovics 1994). These quoted lines show an emerging cultural myth of Indian racial identity, and Indian peopleness. Indians were not simply people, they were a people, with a common history, and common future goals. They held a "racial spirit" (Parker 1916) which was in danger of being "crush[ed]." On the contrary, I would argue that this racial spirit was in danger of being created!

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<sup>52</sup>Western governments realized this fact, and often used tribal conflict to advance their own political agenda. The massacre of the Pequot by the Iroquois confederacy at the request of the governor of the colony of New York prior to King Phillips War is an example of this phenomenon.



The discussion of the *American Indian Magazine* will be limited to a description of the articles, their authors, and contents, from volumes three and four, which cover the years 1916 and 1917. I have chosen these years for two reasons. First, they are close enough to the end of the period of my study for the ideological transformations which I posit to have come to fruition. Second, due to the rare nature of these pieces of archival material, I was limited in my access to them. I would have liked to have been able to examine a run of this magazine, and other periodicals, covering the entire period of my study, but this was not possible.

Volume four, number one, opens with an editorial by Arthur Parker calling for the American Government to settle all tribal land and identity claims.

"One of the most serious drawbacks to the rapid assimilation of the various Indian tribes and bands is the reluctance on the part of the Government (or the barriers it imposes), to allow the settlement of tribal claims... As long as these claims are not properly adjudicated, so long will thousands of Indians live in hope of "getting money sometime." This forlorn hope is detrimental to the welfare and progress of the people entertaining it... They can never have a sure and abiding faith in civilization and in the integrity of civilized government until that government consents to study their claims and settle them once and forever (Parker 1916: 1, 2)."

This article makes the point that tribal identity is a transitional thing, and that those seeking to hold onto it are hindering their climb up the ladder to civilization<sup>53</sup>. The hope of government recognition of tribal rights and lands is "forlorn." Instead of fighting for the rights that Native Americans deserve, this author is saying that they should forget about their tribalness and become a part of the mainstream society. The actions of the government are undercutting the belief in the Indians of the correctness of civilization. What is best for the country is the severance of all tribal ties and government

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<sup>53</sup>This view is consistent with the theories of L.H. Morgan (1877) which I mentioned earlier.



interference in the lives of Indians. This is a strong statement for a magazine whose purpose is to "awaken the pride of a people (Parker 1916: 2, 1)."

One of the articles in this issue, under the heading "The Editor's Viewpoint," is entitled, "The Function of the Society of American Indians." it opens, "The Society of American Indians exists for the inspiration and encouragement of a race in the process of adjustment (Parker 1916: 1, 8)." The magazine "brings together for mutual discussion the more advanced and patriotic men and women of Indian blood. (8)." The whites in the Society "are the guarantee that the Society is not primarily a race organization selfishly devoted to the interests of one race alone (8)." The adjustment being discussed is the assimilation into American society. This was what the editors and contributors to the magazine viewed as the most important part of Indian life at the time. "The modern Indian cannot live on the bitter pottage of history and eat his heart out thinking how the white man cheated his ancestors. It is for him to pluck the feathers from his war bonnet and make fountain pens of them (10)."

The advancement of the Indian race had several levels. Economic advancement alone was not enough. "The Society of American Indians in carrying on its work as an organization must wisely consider every element of race welfare, — the political, the religious, the historical, the economic and the sociological (10)." These various levels constitute the social environment into which Native Americans had to assimilate. Parker cites Dr. Charles A. Eastman, whom he refers to as "one of the great men of the red race (10)," as the inspiration for the following statement<sup>54</sup>. "The Society ought to and must stand for the development of wisely trained leaders who shall provide the inspiration that shall bring a great racial awakening (11)." The problem,

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<sup>54</sup>Eastmann will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.



in Parker's mind was that "the race... did not and has not had the opportunity of upholding even a general plan of action (11)."

This is the ideological point of view from which the magazine was published. It sounds eerily like the ideological message that the government, or as Foucault might say, the self-replicating bureaucratic systems, was trying to discipline into the Native American population. The goal of the schools was a recognizable Indian with an established social role and economic position. The goal of the society was an Indian race (social role and identity) in line with the economic, political and sociological aspects of the rest of society.

The opening plate used in volume 4, number 2, is an interesting one. It shows a Native American woman in tribal dress, seated upon a bench covered with a traditional blanket. She wears a fringed buckskin robe and a feathered headband. She wears beaded leggings and hide moccasins. In her hands, she clutches an object that I would identify as a rattle or wand. Her name and tribal affiliation are included in the text under the image within the magazine.

At first glance, I could not reconcile the use of this image. What purpose would the image serve in advancing the Indian cause if it showed a woman in tribal garb, listed with her tribal affiliation? Stepping back, the purpose of the image became more clear. Instead of attempting to apply my knowledge of the clothing and customs of the Nacoombe tribe to find significance within the plate, I looked at it from the point of view of a reader of the period, or from what I assume to be the point of view of a reader of the period.

For this type of viewer, the image would be taken at face value. It would appear to be an Indian woman, dressed in traditional Indian clothing.



It would support the notion that there was a traditional "Indian" culture that all Native Americans subscribed to. The image is in line with that of the stereotypical Indian, created, to a large extent, during this period.

Photographs of traditional Native American life were popular during this period. Edward S. Curtis was famous for his striking photographs of Native Americans in tribal dress. His posed images helped to create an image, or a tangible symbol, of the Indian for the society. A reader would not understand the woman to be expressing her unique tribal identity, but rather that of the Indian "race." This is the reason the image was included, to help "awaken the pride of a people (Parker 1916: 2, 1)," and to push the notion of a united Indian race within American society<sup>55</sup>.

Within this issue (vol. 4, no. 2), is included a short piece excerpted from *The Red Man's Journal*.<sup>56</sup> Entitled "The Ideal American Citizen," it describes the qualities of the ideal citizen, and serves as a piece of propaganda, attempting to influence the ideas and actions of the readers of the piece (Honey 1990). The piece is intended as a guide to leading a life in accordance with the ideological and moral ideas of the society<sup>57</sup>. In short, it serves as a guide for Indians seeking to become part of the society. The piece calls for a devotion to "liberty," "tolerance," and "justice." The ideal citizen believes in a concept of "common morality (*The American Indian Magazine* 1916: 4 ( 2), 120)." These are the ideals that Native Americans were taught in societal institutions like the boarding school; these messages were pounded into the

<sup>55</sup>The cover plate of volume 5, number 1, 1917 was a picture of a member of the Sioux nation. He was pictured bare-chested, and wore what has come to symbolize Indian identity, a full, feathered headdress.

<sup>56</sup>I was unable to gain access to this publication, but I assume it to be a periodical similar to *The American Indian Magazine*.

<sup>57</sup>I personally love this piece. Pieces of propaganda this blatant are hard to come by, and reading them is amusing, and frightening. This piece is really a "how-to" book on being an American for Native Americans. It seems to support my argument that there was an established social category for Native Americans at this time period.



heads of Native Americans in nearly every sphere of their lives, even periodicals produced by other Native Americans. The overall message is that in order to become a part of mainstream society, Native Americans must embrace the societal beliefs, and live by the cultural categories used to govern behavior. In short, a Native American must live by the "common morality" of the society<sup>58</sup>.

There are strong links between this magazine and the government and its institutions. Richard H. Pratt, the former commander of Fort Marion, founder of the Carlisle School, which served as the model for the entire boarding school system, and general in the United States Army, had a piece published in *The American Indian Magazine*, entitled "What is the Matter With Our Indians?" This is evidence of the links between this publication and the societal mainstream. In the article, Pratt outlines the situation facing Native Americans, places blame for it on the society, and outlines his vision for integrating Native Americans into society.

"Our Indians are in exactly the position we as a nation have placed them... They are still in tribes...most of them depressed and hopeless because they are continued hopelessly unequal to the white man...practically all of them are a burden to the Nation.

"Only through environing our Indians in our civilization, as we always have all emigrants can we end our so-called Indian problem (Pratt 1916, 129)."

Speaking like an anthropologist from thirty years in the future, Pratt stated, "No man is born with language, ideas, incentives, aspirations, superstitions, or other qualities. All these and his abilities as well are acquired through opportunities and from those who control during growth

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<sup>58</sup>This was the period prior to U.S. involvement in World War I. There were similar propaganda messages being sent out across the society. I view the inclusion of Native Americans in this as representative of the fact that their assimilation was assumed to be underway by the time of this publication.



(Pratt 1916, 129)." From here, he diverges slightly from the position of detached social scientist, if there is such a position. "For many years, the government has assumed absolute control over the Indians. It has segregated them...from any participation in our affairs. The government has gone so far as to command and control all their resources and assume all responsibility for their special support (Pratt 1916 129)." The problem, Pratt argues is that all of the control was exerted within the tribal or reservation environment. Additionally, removing them from the economy by exempting them from taxes, and by subsidizing their material resources has stopped Native Americans from fully joining with the society. "Relieving the Indians from all taxation is part of the loaves and fishes we give which induces them to hang together and remain dependent (Pratt 1916, 131)." These actions also alienate native Americans from the rest of society. "In all cases where they come into community with our own people who have to pay all expenses for schools, roads, and county government, prejudice and animosity are bred towards them in their overtaxed neighbors (Pratt 1916, 131)."

In order for Native Americans to advance, they need to come into fruitful contact with the rest of society. One way is through the boarding school system, particularly Pratt's Carlisle School, which had an "outing" policy<sup>59</sup>. This policy, in his own words,

"placed out...during vacation time...six hundred to eight hundred boys and girls from all tribes... in selected American families... to work on farms, the boys to learn farming, and the girls to learn housework. This was in the fullest co-operation with the Indian policy of forcing all Indians to become farmers. The highest results followed, in their more quickly learning the English language and all farm and household industries.

"The students earned (from their labor) \$30,000.00 each year and were welcomed everywhere (Pratt 1916, 132)."

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<sup>59</sup>This term was of Pratt's own creation from his tenure at Carlisle.



Native Americans would never become full members of society as long as the social programs and segregated reservation life continued. "Never will it be possible for the Indian to reach his fullest development into real competing American citizenship so long as he is compelled by the system of his education and training to only compare himself with himself (Pratt 1916, 132)." This is as straightforward a description of the reasoning behind the assimilationist policy of the government as I have encountered in my research. The endorsement of this ideology by a member of the governmental system, within a publication produced primarily by Native Americans, is representative of the degree to which it permeated all levels of the society.

Pratt, and others may have been correct in their view that Native Americans would never become full members of the society as long as the situation remained unchanged. Additionally, their model of assimilation may indeed have made life easier for a number of these Native Americans. However, this investigation is not intended to judge the moral correctness of the actions of the policy makers of American society. Well-intentioned or not, the actions of the state and its associated organizations dismantled an ethnic heritage. Cultures change, but this case is interesting because it is possible to see how a culture was transformed due to external influences.

This periodical is full of similar articles promoting the assimilationist cause. As a "Journal of Race Ideals (Parker 1916: 2, 2)," *The American Indian Magazine*, contained articles primarily concerning the status of the "race" in the society. As a result, the magazine was almost entirely political<sup>60</sup>. The articles were entitled, "The Indian May Solve the Problem Through Industry

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<sup>60</sup>It can, of course, be argued that any publication is in one way or another, political. By using this term, I refer to the overtly political nature of the periodical. Politics were the primary concern of its editors.



(Hoxie 1916, 19)<sup>61</sup>,"and "Let My People Go (Montezuma 1916, 32)<sup>62</sup>." Not all articles were aimed at encouraging Native Americans progress into mainstream society. Equally important was the creation of a historical past, or common history, upon which to base the concept of Indian identity. In addition to the visual imagery discussed above, certain articles pushed forth the notion of a common heritage. Each member of the ethnic group had to have a similar concept of Indianness, and had to share important cultural knowledge. In order to push forth this agenda, *The American Indian Magazine* included articles like, "How Flint Arrowheads Are Made (Parker 1917, 160)," because every Indian should know how to make arrowheads.

This was in part related to the fear of the loss of Native American culture. The fascination with the primitive worked on two levels, destruction and preservation. Each was important for the society. Contemporary anthropologists, in particular the students of Franz Boas, "urged the government to...tone down its assimilation program, (Hoxie 1984, 143)." This was also the period of Alfred Kroeber's work with Ishi, the last member of the Yahi tribe, at Berkeley. There was a dynamic between the assimilation of Native Americans and the protection of the Indian. It led to contradictory statements expressing the need for Native Americans to be factory workers knowledgeable about arrowheads.

One of the most interesting issues of *The American Indian Magazine* that I examined was volume 5, number 4, 1917. It contained a series of articles dedicated to "Men and Women Whose Lives Count For The Red Man's

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<sup>61</sup>This article was written by William Hoxie. His by-line indicated that he was a member of the Fox tribe.

<sup>62</sup>This article was written by Carlos Montezuma M.D., a member of the Apache tribe. As a Native American medical doctor, Montezuma's work plays two roles. First, it pushes forth the assimilationist ideology. Second, he serves as a living symbol of the assimilationist cause, through his success within dominant society.



Cause (Parker 1917: 2, 212)." These were people who helped Native Americans find their place in American society. They were presented as role models for contemporary Indians. Mentioned in the article were: a white anthropologist, a Sioux concert soprano, a Sioux business manager, a Sioux secretary, and a Ohiyesa Sioux writer. The soprano Taluta Eastman, is shown in traditional dress, linking her to the imagined history.<sup>63</sup> The anthropologist, Dr. Clark Wissler, was shown in a jacket and tie, a representation that one could expect for a white professional. He had worked in the American Museum of Natural History, and created the exhibits of the Sioux culture. The inclusion of this individual is interesting, particularly considering the recent debates on the politics of representation, and the power dynamics within museum displays. (Lavine 1991, Alpers 1991, Slotkin 1985, Haraway 1994). This individual is one who had a direct influence in shaping the minds of the members of mainstream society, in regards to Indian identity, because he had control over one of the major sources of information, and propaganda regarding Native Americans, the museum display.

The Sioux business manager is pictured in a traditionally mainstream portrait pose. He is seated with his wife standing behind him. He occupies the lower right portion of the image, and his wife occupies the space above and behind him. Both are dressed in mainstream clothing appropriate for their social position as members of the business community; he wears a suit and tie while she wears a high-collared dress. They are symbols for the assimilationist cause. They appear as the American Indian nuclear family,

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<sup>63</sup>The stereotypical image of the American Indian, at this time, was that of the Plains tribes, particularly the Sioux. The reason that all of the individuals discussed are members of the Sioux nation is that the issue was one commemorating the Sioux, which may or may not be related to the previous statement.



more at home in a residential neighborhood than on a reservation. They appear well adjusted and content, with no visible remnants of their previous cultural identity.



(taken from *The American Indian Magazine* 1917: 5 (4) 267)

The article accompanying the image described Mr. Lincoln's hard work and loyalty. Mr. Lincoln was a graduate of the Chilocco Indian school, the boarding school which Tsianini Lomawaima studied so comprehensively (1993, 1994).

The most interesting character profiled is Dr. Charles Eastman, whose work was previously cited by the editor of *The American Indian Magazine*, Arthur C. Parker. The article describing Eastman is a confused jumble of ethnic markers. Referring to Eastman, the article states, "Here we have a striking example of a life that links the Sioux of the old day with the Sioux of the new generation (Parker 1917: 2, 269)." He was "the greatest Sioux of the



century (269)." At the same time, he was "a loyal and patriotic Red Man, filled with the lore and philosophy of his people, he also (saw) the necessity of pointing out to his race the ways of the modern world (269)." Here is an example of the blurring of the lines demarcating ethnic identity that I have alluded to. Eastman, individually a member of the Sioux tribe, was a Red Man, dedicated to his race, and intent on showing them how to live in the modern world (mainstream American society). The overlapping levels of identity discussed at the close of the last chapter can be seen in the description of this individual. He was at once a member of a tribe (traditional identity), a race (societally created ideal identity), and a society (which required a identity constantly subject to re-negotiation).

### The Land Lease Issue

Instead of solely looking at the magazines as isolated wholes, each with its own agenda, I have also examined the ways in which specific issues were presented in these propaganda sources. These periodicals were one of the places where issues regarding Native Americans were publicly discussed. Additionally, these periodicals provided certain Native Americans with a place to express their own ideas.<sup>64</sup> These periodicals were the ideological front lines, where ideas were presented not to isolated groups of students, or radicals at group meetings, but to an ethnic group as a whole. It was through these and other popular culture sources, i.e. films, photographs, museums et al, that ideas were passed along that influenced the identity of Native

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<sup>64</sup>Of course, not all Native Americans had the ability to publish, due to educational, economic, or a combination of other factors. However, the fact that certain Native Americans did publish in these sources shows that they were, on some level, accepted as a means of public discourse for Native Americans, or at least for Indians.



Americans, and served to convince Native Americans and members of the larger society to take certain courses of action which had irrevocable effects on the Native American ethnic group.

Under William Jones, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1897 until 1905, Native American reservations were broken apart and divided between whites and Native Americans. Whites were eager to get their hands on the only remaining portions of unclaimed, by whites, land in the United States. Congressmen lobbied for the dismantling of the reservations, claiming, as Wyoming's Congressman Frank Mondell did, that without the land, "a large portion of the state would for years remain undeveloped, (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 158)." Portions of the reservation lands were sold to white settlers. The Native American tracts of land were held in trust by the government for the tribes. These groups often divided this land between the members of the tribe. The tribes could develop the land, and earn money from its material deposits, chiefly oil, but could not sell the land. Many Native Americans took their share of the tribal allotment, and rather than develop it themselves, leased the land to non-Native American farmers and ranchers. In this way, the Native Americans held on to the land, and drew profits from its production.

Members of the mainstream society did not applaud the shrewd business tactics of the Native Americans. While the land was being developed, and the society as a whole gaining from its use, white businessmen and politicians grew frustrated at the loss of profits to the Native Americans. Members of business associations and farmers unions lobbied to remove the restrictions barring the sale of these lands, which led to the passage of laws like the *Burke Act* of 1906, which gave Congress the right to remove restrictions on any piece of allotment land at any time for sale on



the open market (Hoxie 1984, 165). This was not enough for many members of the white community. At a conference at Lake Mohonk in 1910, the then-Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Robert Valentine, stated that new policies were needed, which would "place each Indian upon a piece of land of his own where he could by his own efforts support himself and his family or to give him and equivalent opportunity in industry or trade, to lead him to conserve and utilize his property...rather than to have it as an unappreciated heritage, (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 175)." The thinly veiled rhetoric of this statement makes it clear that it was time for the Native Americans to circle their wagons, because the whites were out to take away the land which had previously been relatively secure in their possession. Various periodicals written either for or by Native Americans focused on the repercussions surrounding this issue, and other aspects of the land lease arrangement.

The September 1913 issue of *The Red Man*, a publication of the Carlisle Indian School, a federal boarding school located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, included a speech by United States Indian Representative, Dana H. Kelsey, regarding the matter. As a publication of a federal institution, it is not surprising that the article, entitled "Advises Selling Excess Indian Land to Farmers," contains arguments supporting the position of the government and the members of the society who support it. The reasoning behind the arguments, and the information provided within the speech ignore the specifics of Native American life at the time, and allude to the Indian whose identity is supported by the mainstream culture<sup>65</sup>.

Kelsey refers to the thousands of acres of farmable land, held by Native Americans, that remained unfarmed. Kelsey could not stereotype Native

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<sup>65</sup>Again, this is not surprising since the periodical was a product of the very institutions which served to enforce the assimilationist ideology, the boarding schools.



Americans as lazy, because of the assimilationist image of Indians as hardworking citizens trying to work their way into American society. It was the members of the larger group of Native Americans who did not share the drive for success that were the problem. "I want to distinguish clearly between the professional or business Indian and the real Full-Blood (Kelsey 1913, 16)."

As Tsianini Lomawaima has pointed out, it is the quantity of pure versus tainted blood which served to define racial categories for Native Americans at the time. Full-Blooded Indians were the most wild, or the least civilized (Lomawaima 1993). The high concentration of Native American versus white blood also meant a high concentration of the unwholesome social characteristics, drunkenness, laziness, spendthriftness, greediness, etc.. Through his choice of words, and the connecting symbols, Kelsey has at once created a scapegoat for the economic problem facing the society, and has praised the efforts of progressive Native Americans. His statement cannot be contradicted without calling into question the moral character of the Indian.<sup>66</sup> "Professional" Indians cannot support the other members of their tribal group without calling into question their own actions and moral code. Any attempt to identify with the less successful, in terms of what the society viewed as important, would negate the personal progress of the individual. Even worse, such an attempt would call into question the ability of Native Americans to assimilate successfully into mainstream society.

Kelsey saw two interrelated problems within the land lease issue, the Indian problem, and land development. To clarify, Kelsey's Indian problem was society's Indian problem. American culture had to assimilate the Indian.

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<sup>66</sup> This term is used to mean the identity assigned by the members of the mainstream culture. It contains the moral character taught to a generation of Native Americans through the Federal Schooling System.



As I have discussed in the introductory sections of this paper, American society had created an image of Native Americans that was unattainable. The Indian mounted on a pony and facing the sunset in the American West, as portrayed in the 1916 sculpture "The End of the Trail," by James E. Fraser (Truettner 1991, 174), was an identity unattainable by contemporary Native Americans<sup>67</sup>. However, the society could not deal with the realities of these same people. Images of reservation life, and the thought of labor free Native Americans supported by money from the government clashed with the moral code of the society. This was the Indian problem. The solution, at least as far as policy and propaganda makers was concerned, was to shape the Native American into an image that fit with the rest of the society.

Kelsey had a solution to these connected dilemmas. His reasoning was that in order to fit into the society, Native Americans would have to become economically productive. In order to do so, they would have to abandon the system of leasing the land to others. While they made enough money to survive, they did not become useful parts of their local, state, or national communities. They also would have to abandon their traditional farming methods, which were seen as primitive, and required large amounts of land in order to produce minimal crops. His solution was for the Native Americans to sell off their excess land, and to divide the rest between the members of the tribe that wanted to succeed. In other words, he would have had the "professional" Indians supplied with land in order for them to thrive, and would let the Full-Blooded Indians fall by the wayside as victims

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<sup>67</sup>Dime novels, a popular form of literature at this time, provided the counter-Indian to the assimilationist image. There was a two pronged assault on Native American identity here. Some societal images showed the free Indian, largely a historical creation, and completely unrealistic for the contemporary social conditions. The other pole of this assault on Native American identity revolved around the assimilationist school of thought. Native Americans were caught between two conflicting societal viewpoints.



of the rise to success. These full-blooded Indians would either starve, be supported by the community and the government not as Indians, but as members of the society's poor, or follow the example set by the "Professional" Indians. The Indian would no longer be a problem. Since Indians would be productive members of the American society, the stereotype of Indians as lazy and worthless would have to be redefined. Certainly, some Native Americans might fit this image, but they could not be conceptualized as being any different from the unsuccessful Irish or Italians in metropolis areas.

The money from the sale of the land would be invested in modern machinery that would allow the Native Americans to gain the greatest benefits from their land acreage. These farmers would then produce as much, or more, than they had before the land sale, and more land would be used effectively. Non-Indian farmers would no longer be forced to give part of their profits away as rent, the Native Americans would earn more with their new farms, and the society as a whole would benefit. Not only would the reservation Indian be replaced by a Native American farmer, a new productive member of society, but the ideologically troublesome Indian would be out of the way.

"The time is not far distant when many of these Indians must gain their livelihood from the soil. Those who have been depending upon periodical per capita or other payments, or lease money, will find it a difficult matter to subsist when these payments cease, unless their land holdings are made more productive, and they are taught improved methods of farming. It is not our hope that the uneducated fullblood can, ... grasp scientific methods expounded by government and state agricultural agents, but if they can be made to understand and use even a few of the advanced ideas...it is very evident that the Indian will advance and take advantage of the ...benefits acquired by good farming...as compared with the old way ... If the improvement in agricultural conditions is ... good for Eastern Oklahoma, it is also good for the Indian Citizenship, and any improvement that can be brought about which relates to the Indian naturally rebounds to the advancement of the community (Kelsey 1914 , 17-18)."



The same issue of the magazine contained a photo spread under the same heading as the above article. The images contrasted two sets of Native American farmers, those farming and living in a "traditional way,"<sup>68</sup> and those utilizing modern methods and equipment. A ramshackle wooden house, complete with a caving roof and sagging door frame was labeled, "Typical Home of a Full Blooded Indian (*Red Man* 1914, 32)" On the same page, a modern frame house was shown as representative of the progressive Indian home. It was "constructed under the supervision of government agents (*Red Man* 1914, 32);" this home would not have looked out of place in many non-Indian residential areas. The plans for the home were given to the Native Americans by the government, which was attempting to assimilate the Native American into mainstream society. By changing the image of Native Americans in this way, the government was smoothing away the characteristics that separated Native Americans from the rest of society.

The images on the facing page contrast the modern and traditional methods of farming. In the first of the photographs, a single Native American male is shown. He is standing alone in a barren field, driving a single animal, which is pulling an outdated plow. The caption reads, "Old Way, Poor Equipment, (*Red Man* 1914, 33)." The juxtapose image features several Native American and White males surrounding a more technologically advanced plow and horse team. The field that they stand in

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<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that the images labeled as traditional, or typical of the "Full-Blooded Indian," which suggests that the lifestyle is typical of the historical lifestyle of Native Americans before white contact, actually reflects the lifestyle of mainstream American society from a half-century earlier. Iron plows, horse teams, and large wooden houses were not parts of the traditional life of the average Creek Indian, the nation of which the Native Americans pictured were a part. These individuals had taken on parts of the white culture, and incorporated them into their own culture. However, the mainstream society had changed, and as a result, the contemporary Native American farmers were as foreign to the society as their ancestors had to the white farmers utilizing the same technological implements fifty years earlier.



had already been plowed in even rows, a glaring contrast to the disorganized land in the first image. The accompanying caption lets the viewer know the well tended field was tended in the "new way, with good teams and modern machinery purchased upon advice of government agents (*Red Man* 1914, 33)."

The entire photo essay is a propaganda piece intended to show the benefits to Native Americans of modernization and assimilation into white society. It issues a moral challenge to the reader of the magazine, both Native American and white<sup>69</sup>. When faced with the Indian Problem, which had just been linked with the land lease issue, the message was clear. It was wrong for Native Americans to live in the traditional method. By doing so, they were dooming themselves to forever live in squalor. Additionally, the land that they were abusing was going to waste, which in turn, threatened the society as a whole. The answer to this problem was simple. In order to benefit all, the land should be divided and sold to whites and enterprising Native Americans. Then all could share in the luxuries provided by modern farming methods. Native Americans, if they wanted to continue as farmers, would be forced to make their smaller farms productive. In order to do so, they would have to utilize modern farming methods. They would attain an economic position on an equal level with their white neighbors, and would, over time, become part of the local farming community. Their presence would benefit the local community, and the additional crops produced on once unfarmed land would aid the society as a whole.

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<sup>69</sup>The exact readership of the magazine is unclear. Letters to the editors of the magazine, the administrators of the Carlisle school, were mostly written by Carlisle Alumni. However, articles in the magazine were written by members of the societal bureaucracy. The readership, if made up of individuals similar to the profile of the contributors, was already sympathetic to the mainstream assimilationist ideas, and therefore the propaganda served to reinforce their belief.



The essays, both photographic and textual, also served to advance the cause of the boarding schools. Students who attended the Federal Indian Boarding Schools were taught modern farming techniques, and were practiced in their use. They left the schools with knowledge that would allow them to take up the role of "Professional Indian" farmers. Through the boarding school system, the Indian Problem would, over time, be solved.

An article describing Native Americans' innate ability to manage natural resources was also featured in this issue of the periodical. The article, entitled, "The Indians and Game Preservation," was placed in this issue of the magazine to reinforce the idea that Native Americans should pursue careers as farmers, and that they should not attempt to infiltrate the largely white professional ranks. In this article, the author describes the care that Native Americans took in "farming" the game that they hunted, unlike the whites, who saw hunting as a sport where the object was to kill all that they could. The Native Americans had an understanding of nature, and they realized that they owed their lives to a wise management of their natural resources. The message of the article is clear; Native Americans should be the farmers of the society, because they are traditionally suited to it. Whites do not have the same understanding of nature, and are unsuited to the task of farming. The Native Americans are good at farming and hunting, and they should stick to it. The illustration accompanying this article shows a pair of Plains Indians, mounted on ponies, hunting cattle, reverting to the standard popular culture image of Native Americans as the noble savage suited to a life in the wilderness. However, the contemporary wilderness is not that of the open plains, but of the open fields, and the ponies had been replaced by draft animals, and the bows by plows (Speck 1914).



One of the final articles in the issue deals with the story of a Native American male who was a graduate of the Carlisle School. He had taken the knowledge that he earned at the schools and had enrolled in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. One of his designs was printed in the magazine. The caption read, "Plan for a Carnegie Branch Library by John Farr, Chippewa Indian." The drawing showed a Federal style building that would have blended in perfectly with the architecture of most contemporary American towns. The only difference between the building pictured and the hundreds already existence was that the plan had been done by a Chippewa Indian. In the article praising the ambition and ability of John Farr, appeared the following paragraph.

"While only a few Indians enter the professional ranks, a large majority of them being content - *and rightly so* - to make a success in business, in the trades, in framing, and housekeeping, it is a clear indication of the progress among our Indians to see many of the red men making good in the higher walks of life."

(Red Man 1914 pp. 36, emphasis mine)

A single successful Native American professional posed no threat to the established social hierarchy. In fact, it helps to soothe the moral conscience of the group. The danger is in large numbers of Native Americans entering the largely White job territory. The example of John Farr is a good one, and meshes well with the assimilationist ideology of the period. The myth of assimilation can be believed if there are examples like John Farr, as long as there are not large numbers of Native Americans breaking out of the societally defined category of the Indian, which has social, political, and economic aspects. John Farr also gives Native Americans hope, and a reason to believe in the assimilationist rhetoric, which is acceptable, to the systems in power within society, as long as Native Americans remain in the lower trades of farming and business, where they "rightfully" belong. This



sentiment was echoed in a statement by the Board of Indian Commissioners who announced that "while a few (Indians) might push their way into professional life, the great majority must win their living by manual labor, (quoted in Hoxie 1984, 193.)."

The ideological bent of this publication seems to be decidedly conservative. The messages sent by the producers of this periodical seem to support the policies of the government, and the desires of the majority culture. A sensible question would be why this is so, when the magazine itself is produced by Native American students? The key to understanding this phenomenon is to examine the pressures placed on the students working for the magazine. *The Red Man* is first and foremost, a publication of the Carlisle Indian school, one of the Federal Boarding Schools. The purpose of this institution is to shape the minds of Native American youths, and to make them subjects of the ideology of the majority society. Its purpose, as defined in the last page of the magazine itself is to, "Train Indians as teachers, homemakers, mechanics, and industrial leaders either among their own people or in competition with whites (*Red Man* 1914, 39)."

The tools of hegemony serve to break down resistance to ideology, and to facilitate its acceptance. For Native Americans and members of the majority culture at this time, formal and informal institutions, like the boarding schools and popular culture media, performed this actions. These institutions subtly shaped the ways in which members of the entire society conceived of the Native American and the role of Native Americans in American society. The message of this periodical is that there is a place in American society to which Native Americans are ideally suited. They are the skilled laborers, teachers, and housekeepers of the society. On occasion, they are the professionals of society, and in some cases, they are the unemployed



unskilled members of the lowest class. They are not the movers and shakers of society, but they are members of the working class, whose efforts serve to advance the cause of the leaders of society.

This periodical was a publication of a Federal school. The school was a part of the government, which is an tangible extension of the power of the ruling class. In effect, the policies of the school, as evident in the paper, were the manifestations of the desires of those in power in the society<sup>70</sup>. In this case, the powerful want to assimilate the Native American into the ranks of the majority society. In order to do so, the Native American must internalize the ideological code of the majority society, which is passed on through hegemonic and propagandistic tools like this magazine. By taking on the role of the average citizen, the Native American would be influenced by the same means of persuasion as other members of the society. In effect, Native Americans would be convinced of the rightness of the system which served to oppress them and which robbed them of their traditional identity, and which even worse, stopped their culture from changing on its own. The culture of the Native American was always undergoing change, but in some cases, this change was driven by forces internal to the closed systems of interaction between Native American cultural groups. The introduction of American society, and the resulting oppression made one large cultural system subject to the ideological influence of another. By accepting the ideological system of their oppressors, and by reifying it through their actions and non-actions, Native Americans served as unknowing supporters of the ideological system that robbed them of their freedom. These actions, while potentially empowering, still denied Native American cultures a chance to

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<sup>70</sup>In keeping with a Foucauldian analysis, the powerful are not any discernible group, but rather the self-replicating systems which serve to maintain the power hierarchy of the society.



develop on their own, in response to internal guidance based on interaction with external stimuli. The problem with the way in which Native American identity evolved revolves around the power dynamic between Native American cultures and mainstream society. It was a straightforward case of internal colonialism and domination.

Many Native American periodicals of this time period were not produced by government agencies or their subsidiaries. A great number of newspapers were produced by Native American community groups. These papers served two conscious purposes. First, they reported the happenings of the local community, as well as the state and national news. Second, they served as forums for discussing issues that the editors of the paper felt were important for the local Native American population, although not all members of the local population would necessarily agree, or even care.

The second function of these local papers was an important one. In many cases, the issues reported were the same ones addressed by the "government" periodicals. By analyzing the ways in which these issues were discussed in these periodicals, it is possible to see the extent to which the ruling ideology of the society permeated the society's periphery.

These newspapers show a contemporary reader the extent to which Native American groups were aware of the ideological forces to which they were subject. Instead of visualizing Native Americans as helpless ignorant puppets of a powerful state apparatus, an analysis of text-based media allows a researcher to sift through the levels of meaning the messages expressed contain. The widespread use of printing in the language of the society is a boon to the researcher as well. Native American groups were expressing themselves through the mechanisms of the larger society. The symbols of communication used by the society had been appropriated for use by its



marginalized members. While this action can be viewed as the result of the assimilation of the Native American, it can also be seen as an empowering action. Native Americans were conceiving of themselves and their actions on a level equal with that of the members of mainstream society. In order to understand the messages contained in the publications, a researcher does not have to be knowledgeable with the unique cultural codes of cognition of the marginalized group. These messages are being expressed in the symbolic code of the greater society.<sup>71</sup>

The subject content of the February, 1915, issue of the *Indian Scout*, addresses some of the same issues as the previously cited issue of *The Red Man*. In its own words, the *Indian-Scout* is "published for the Kickapoo, Shawnee and Pottawatomie Indians of Oklahoma, and their Friends and neighbors (*Indian Scout* 1915, 1)." This paper was published by the Shawnee, Oklahoma, Indian School<sup>72</sup>. This school was not part of the Federal Boarding School system. It was a local school, and the students still had interactions with their native tribal groups and communities. The curriculum was similar to that in the Federal schools, but because these students were not forced to sever their link to their native communities, they did not undergo the intense ideological training that students within the boarding schools faced. There were, however, similarities in the moral code of students and their respective communities in both the Federal Boarding School, and the

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<sup>71</sup> Without a doubt, there are subtle nuances within the texts that contain references to the specific cultural context of which they were a product. The majority of these symbols, and their meaning will remain hidden from most researchers. However, much of the symbolic code of the group being studied has, in effect, been translated into the symbolic language of American society.

<sup>72</sup> This publication depended on its readership for financial support, unlike *The Red Man*. There were requests for additional subscribers in many of the issues that I had access to, and as I will mention later, this periodical was the only one I investigated which contained advertisements. This represents a need for additional financial support. This is one reason why I do not find this publication to be as much of a government mouthpiece as, for example, *The Red Man*.



non-Federal Boarding environments, which shows how the ideology of the society was able to permeate the subject group without the intense discipline utilized within the boarding schools.

This publication lacks the sophisticated publishing style of the *Red Man*, and *The American Indian Magazine*. In addition, the majority of its subject matter deals with local issues rather than those of importance for the "race." For example, the first pages of the paper detail reports of "Good Scouts," members of the community who should serve as examples to their neighbors. For example, during the period of the printing of this issue, Mr. Charley Sloat planted ten acres of alfalfa. "The two carloads of coal recently were handled and properly put in bins, at the School, by Eli Foreman, Jesse Ellis, and James Beaver. These fellows are good workers, and are not afraid to get their faces dirty at honest toil (Green 1915: 2, 1)." The only similar reference in *The Red Man* appeared on the final page of the magazine, where graduates of the Carlisle School and their accomplishments were listed. The accomplishments of Native Americans were secondary to the political message, while readers of the *Indian Scout* were more interested with the actions of the fellow members of their community than they were with political movements.<sup>73</sup>

The community is the central focus of the newspaper. Another story on the lead page focused on the political appointment of a community official.

"Willie Murdock has been appointed Indian Police for the Kickapoo District. It will be his duty to do all he can to encourage his people to be sober, industrious, honest, homeloving Indians, to act as interpreter, and to assist in every way possible... in bringing peace to every Kickapoo Home, (*Indian Scout* 1915, 1)."

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<sup>73</sup>This is a presumption on my part. In journalism, the lead story is usually considered to be the most important piece of news. This method of analysis led me to draw my conclusion.



The next few pages of the paper contain similar articles, including reports from the school, local employment appointments, and letters to the editors of the paper. Of note was the fact that over half of the letters published were written by non-Native Americans. Among the writers were a federal district judge, and a local bank president.<sup>74</sup>

By analyzing these data, the links between the types of actions presented as moral, and correct, and the actions described in *The American Indian Magazine's* description of the ideal American citizen are clear. The moral code of society has been impressed on the creators of this periodical, and to certain members of the Native American community as well, as their actions show.

It is difficult to discern who, or what, was the driving force behind the publication of this paper. Although officially a government publication, its subject matter is different from that of *The Red Man*, an overtly government influenced publication. The editor of the paper was O.J. Green, the superintendent of the Shawnee Indian School, and most likely a non-Native American member of the ruling bureaucracy. Unlike *The American Indian Magazine* there was no attempt to identify the authors of the articles, either by name, or by tribal affiliation. The result is that it is hard to classify how this magazine fits in as part of my analysis. Figures on readership are logistically impossible to uncover, as are specifics about the newspaper's production.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the foundation of my argument is somewhat undermined. With this in mind, I intend simply to analyze the data

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<sup>74</sup> The latter took care to mention the fact that he was a "good scout." This means that he lived up to the moral standards of the community, and treated the Native American citizens fairly.

<sup>75</sup> The only information that I could uncover about the newspaper was that it existed, and the only primary source material that I could gain access to was the four year run which I examined!



contained within the newspaper, and draw my conclusions from this source, instead of from data external to the paper itself. This is rather a weak research stance, but the best that I could come up with given the situation.

The political slant of the newspaper comes through in a section simply labeled "News." This section deals with several financial transactions between Native Americans and white business people. In short, each incident was judged according to the moral code of the community<sup>76</sup>. After the report of each transaction is written a simple statement. Examples include, "both parties deserve a jolt in the deal," and "Both parties to this deal need a lesson (Green 1915: 2, 3)."

Following these examples is a series of editorial comments directly related to the subject described in the land lease proposal by the federal Indian Agent. They refer to the lease rates attained by Native Americans from white bankers and business people. Also included in the writings are references to the land sale proposal.

"These are the kind of people a bunch of Indian Friends (?) want thrown on their own resources, at once. These Indians (those involved in business interactions with Whites) and a lot more like them, including old, ignorant, helpless, hard drinkers, and otherwise incompetents, own lands and funds, which are a temptation to their scheming and unscrupulous friends (?).

"If these Indians do not need the care, direction, and supervision of the government, then there is no further need, whatever, for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, notwithstanding, "the bunch" of interested people trying to secure the removal of all restrictions from these Indians. Don't misunderstand us. We know there are a great many very able and competent Indians in this locality - (see our front page) - but the matter of competency, removal of all restrictions, etc. must be based on individual Indian character and should not be a matter for wholesale legislation." (Green 1915: 2, 3)

Following this serious political statement were several columns concerning new legislation about illegal bootlegging on tribal lands, and

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<sup>76</sup> At this point, the moral code of the community has not yet been clearly defined. However, an understanding of this code reveals important information about the level of assimilation into the mainstream culture achieved by this group of tribal units.



advice to farmers about the proper way to raise chickens. This was a pattern for this paper. Relatively serious ideological matters were interspersed with articles of direct concern only to members of the local community. It appears as though the editors of the paper realized that the community had several levels of need, and attempted to address the concerns of its readers equally. Even so, the main goal of the paper was to raise consciousness about the ways in which Native Americans and the mainstream society interacted. The paper's statement of purpose makes this clear.

"This little paper is to tell the white folks about the "red" blood in their circulation, and the red folks about the white life open to us all, and if possible to bring about truer understanding, fairer dealings, and to encourage better life, sympathy and harmony, all looking toward the Great light which shines freely for every one." (*Indian Scout* 1914, 4).

That is a clear expression of the assimilationist ideology that was created by the society as a means of creating the Indian. It shows an acceptance of the concept of a single Indian category, the "red" blood. It differs from other, similar expressions of this ideology because it spells out the possibility, if it really was a possibility, of Native Americans attaining a social position within mainstream society, with "the white life open to us all." It appeals to the concept of the American Melting Pot, where ethnic difference strengthens the society. This societal myth, like many others, has been dismantled. Difference was overtly valued, but subtly discouraged.

The next section of the paper of consequence for this investigation directly challenged the political agenda of the policy makers of the society. In a section entitled "Money to Lend," was a paragraph describing the dangers of the land sale proposal.

"Don't delude yourselves with the notion that when you have secured the land and money of the Indian that you will be shed of the "Indian Problem. If you make paupers and tramps of these people, you



will then have to dig up in the way of taxes and other funds for their support. Uncle Sam expects the states to take up this work very soon.

"Why not support the Indian toward self-support, a good home, and honorable citizenship. Come on now, quit this loan-shark-Credit-Trust-Co., and be a good scout." (*Indian Scout* 1915, 4).

This discussion makes me wonder who was in charge of the production of this periodical. If it was a member of the societal system of power, then the policies which served to reinforce the existing economic order, like draining the resources from Native Americans, would not be called into question. My theory was that the paper, while produced by an extension of the state, remained relatively free from government controls. This allowed the creators of the work to publish articles like the one described above, which questioned the motives of members of the societal hierarchy. The reasoning for these actions could be that the producers of the newspaper might have been caught up in the discourse of the society. Although I have labeled the assimilationist theory as a mechanism of control exerted on Native Americans, this periodical might be an example of how the ideology affected members of the ruling systems. Simply because an individual enforces the discourse does not mean that one is aware of its underlying meaning. The editor of this paper could have been at once an enforcer of the societal discourse, and a subject of the enforced ideology. This would create a closed loop of control in the ideological system which would strengthen the transfer of knowledge, and therefore the exertion of power onto the subject group, all the while removing the ideological struggle from the power center of the society, which lessens the risk of disrupting the *status quo*<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup>If this is not the case, then one is left with dilemma about the nature of the publication. It could be that the creator of the periodical knew of the political situation, but published the information in an attempt to create an imaginary opposition in order to strengthen solidarity to the ideological cause. This raises too many moral and logistical questions to be addressed in this discussion.



*The Indian Scout* is unique, because it allows a researcher to see the effects of the assimilationist ideology on the reservation. By describing the actions of individuals, it is possible to see how far the ideology permeated the group in question, and how it affected the actions of its members. One of the scariest, and most humorous, examples of the saturation of the assimilationist ideology is found in volume 4, number 6, of *The Indian Scout*. The article, entitled "Baby Show," describes a competition held in order to find out which was the best baby on the reservation. It was held during the annual Indian Fair, which was similar to contemporary state fairs<sup>78</sup>. Native Americans showed off their Indian skills, or the skills which they had been taught while learning to become Indians. Men showed off the fruits of their agricultural labors and their livestock, and women competed in knitting competitions. In addition, babies were judged by three members of the community, named in the article, who, "went over the little folks very carefully, weighing, measuring, and testing in almost a hundred ways (*The Indian Scout* 1917: 4, 15)." The winning baby scored 965 points, although the total number of possible points is not mentioned. Just as there was an ideal Indian, there was an ideal Indian baby. But, as the Indian was an unattainable category for Native Americans, "there never was an absolutely perfect baby (15)."

Included within *The Indian Scout* were photographs, sketches, and something unique to the periodicals I examined, advertisements. Each of these different media sources had an effect on the transmission of an

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<sup>78</sup>The Indian Fairs were interesting phenomena. During a period when the government was attempting to halt indigenous gatherings, it allowed these fairs, because they mimicked mainstream expositions. Scholars have had differing viewpoints on the effect of these fairs on Native Americans. Loretta Fowler viewed them as attempts at creating or maintaining tribal unity (Fowler 1989). Craig Bates identifies them as ritual spaces where the Pan-Indian identity that I have been discussing was celebrated and legitimized by the mainstream society (Bates 1978, 56-57).



ideological message to the readers. One of the sketches features a farmer standing in a field, leaning on a plow, and wiping the sweat from his brow. Behind him is a neatly arranged farm, and above him, the sun has been given a human face, which smiles down with approval. The farmer is a Native American, as suggested by his facial features, although his work clothes do not identify him as a member of a distinct tribe. He is plowing from the background to the foreground, which is emblazoned with the statement, "The End of the Trail." The caption reads, "The Path of Righteousness (*The Indian Scout* 1916 4, 6)."<sup>79</sup> The message is simple, through hard work, the Indian will attain righteousness. This is a message similar to that of "The Ideal American Citizen." In keeping with the assimilationist ideology, the message gains a new level of meaning. Through hard work, the Indian will gain a place within the moral community of American citizens, and will eventually become part of the society.

Another example of rhetoric supporting the assimilationist cause is found in a one page quote attributed to the editor of the newspaper. The quote reads simply, "An Indian, like a white man, is competent when he can 'mind his own business' with profit to himself and the community in which he lives (Green 1916 3, 18)." Here, the Indian is compared to the white, and told that the path to success is the same for both. By following the guidelines, an Indian could gain the same success, and therefore position, as a white. This is untrue, because the Indian was a category created with a specific social and economic role in mind, that of a docile unskilled laborer in the underclass of society (Littlefield 1989).

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<sup>79</sup>It is interesting to note that at the top of each page is the slogan "Indian Scout: A Pathfinder for Indians." The message could be that by following the advice of *The Indian Scout*, an Indian could find the path to success or righteousness, and find a place within society.



The photographic images used in this publication show the civilization of the Indian, or at least, movement along the path to civilization. In one notable image, five Native American men are shown standing in front of the U.S. Indian Agency. They are dressed in jackets, hats, and ties, as would a member of the white professional class. The caption reads, "The Pottawatomie Business Committee (*The Indian Scout* 1916: 3, 14)" By placing these individuals in dress appropriate for white businessmen, an attempt is made at linking the mainstream business community with the Indian business community, another example of assimilationist propaganda. Additionally, placing the individuals in front of the Indian agency serves a dual purpose. To a viewer not directly related to the situation, it shows dependence, and identifies the Native Americans pictured with the government agency. However, the position of the figures can also indicate a movement away from the government agency, which shows advancement, which is why the agency was relegated to the background of the image.

Most of the other images show Indians in various stages along the path to advancement. They appear to be propaganda for the assimilationist cause. One image entitled, "Orchard Spraying," features the following caption, "A Pottawatomie Indian, Gardener at the Shawnee Indian School, with his pre-vocational boys learning by doing. These two Indian boys know more about Orchard spraying than half the white farmers of Oklahoma (*The Indian Scout* 1916 9, 3)." Images show neat frame houses with captions like, "Two Mexican Kickapoo homes near McLoud, Oklahoma (*The Indian Scout* 1916 3, 14)," which tells a reader that frame houses, are the proper homes for Native Americans.

The advertisements within the newspaper are interesting because they show a link between the reservation economy, and the economy of the



mainstream society. This integration gives justification for the notion of assimilation and a sense of a single, albeit stratified, society. One of my favorite advertisements features a picture of Thomas A. Edison. The ad is for a phonograph shop. To me, this shows how much of mainstream society has infiltrated reservation life. If phonographs were available on the Shawnee reservation, then the presence of the ideology of the society should be guaranteed. Thomas Edison is a symbol of the assimilationist ideology at work on Native American reservations in 1916.

This is not the only explanation. Instead of an attempt by mainstream society at forcing the ideology onto the reservation, Edison could have been an import by members of the reservation community. This would show an acceptance of the progress oriented vision of the Indian. It would, in fact, support the third stage in the subjectification of a subject group: the self-subjectification. By identifying with the industrialization of the rest of the society, the readers of *The Indian Scout*, who economically supported the phonograph shop, were exhibiting their acceptance of the guiding ideological principles of the society.

This chapter has attempted to show how much of the ideology forced upon Native Americans through systems of discipline like the boarding schools was internalized. Its emergence in print media produced by, at least in part, and likewise supported by Native Americans shows an acceptance on a conscious or subconscious level.



## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

The forces acting on Native Americans during this time period cannot be viewed individually. The resultant actions on the part of Native American individuals and groups are not simply reactions to isolated stimuli. The features showcased in this study are not unconscious, knee-jerk reactions of ideologically brainwashed subjects. Native Americans were not unthinking machines programmed to act in certain ways, like the soldiers in *The Manchurian Candidate*. There were no identifiable individuals pulling the strings of Native American puppets at this time. Instead, there were systems of meaning and power acting on the group. The persuasiveness of the ideology came from the effects of the larger power structures on the individuals, who in turn became part of a recognizable group.

Recently, scholars have used the work of Michel Foucault to analyze historical social phenomena (Lebovics 1994, Cressy 1994, Davis 1994). I also utilize several of his central ideas in my work. The central question within my research surrounds the motivation of Native Americans at the specific times and places of my study. In theory, an analysis of the data sources I refer to can lead to several satisfying conclusions surrounding questions of Native American identity and collective memory. However, without an understanding of the factors influencing the specific Native Americans at the time, my conclusions are little more than theoretical possibilities; they require a foundation in reality.

Clifford Geertz has discussed the role of ideology in the shaping of cultural patterns of thought (Geertz 1973). His discussions of cultural webs of



meaning which serve to order the lives of members of a society, and provide the parameters for everyday life is insightful, however, it is a purely theoretical argument. To Geertz, every part of daily life has meaning, and influences the interactions of individuals; this is the key to understanding his notion of "thick description." If everything is so loaded with meaning, then what purpose does the culture serve<sup>80</sup>? While an ideology serves as a cultural system of belief, and does in many ways, organize and order the lives of the followers of the ideology, there has to be a catalyst that leads to the ideology's acceptance by the group. While ideologies can be subversive, and can change the cultural patterns of cognition subtly, there still must be a motivational factor that inspires individuals to forgo their previous system of cultural categorization in favor of the newer one. This catalyst is lacking in Geertz's work. There are not sufficient distinctions between the levels of meaning within society.

Foucault takes the next necessary step. He argues that there are forces at work on individuals that can tangibly affect the lives of these same individuals. Ideological battles simply exist within the minds of the combatants. As many would-be philosophers have discovered, knowing the answer to the meaning of life does not fill one's stomach. While Geertz's work is applicable to his own field research in Bali, it is difficult to apply it to social phenomena outside of this specific cultural sphere. Foucault's work lacks this cultural specificity, and his analyses of the role of discursive systems

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<sup>80</sup>The use of culture here may be confusing. I mean culture as a limiting system of belief which takes the universe of human interaction within the social and natural world and breaks it down into categories which keep individuals from being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the forces constantly around them.



can be more easily applied<sup>81</sup>. Using his systems of control, it is easy to see the function of social institutions cross-culturally.

As far as my study is concerned, American society had many ways of influencing Native Americans. At work on these individuals were forces controlling their economic, cultural, and subsistence needs. It was the ability of the mainstream society to affect the daily lives of Native Americans that facilitated the acceptance of a new ideological system more than any amount of cognitive ideological warfare could hope to accomplish<sup>82</sup>. Individuals can ignore ideological messages. What forces these same people to follow the messages being received are things that cannot be ignored. For Native Americans, there were numerous actions by the American government that could not be ignored. These tangible actions help to fill the gaps in my theoretical argument, and provide reasons for the actions of Native American individuals and groups.

The most important part of Foucault's work for this project concerned the subjectification of human beings in social systems. The main question that this paper asks is, "How were Native Americans made the subjects of an ideology that caused them to embrace a new identity, that of the 'Indian?'" Foucault's three-part approach to the subjectification worked in concert with my conceptualization of the project, and meshed closely with my major data

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<sup>81</sup>This leads one to a theoretical crossroads, at least as far as anthropological theory is concerned. The prevailing school of thought in anthropology revolves around cultural relativity, or the uniqueness of cultures. Subscribers to this theory believe that each culture must be understood in its own terms, and that categories of analysis developed externally should not be applied whole-heartedly to the culture being studied. In this case, however, I feel justified in applying Foucault's methods of analysis without great changes. Part of the reason is due to the historical nature of the project; it is impossible to know about the specificity of these cultures with any degree of certainty. Little reliable ethnographic data, in my opinion, remains to allow a me to know about the cultural universes of the individuals whose actions I am studying.

<sup>82</sup>The distinction between ideology and action is not as clear cut as my argument suggests. This distinction is a symbolic one. As with any social interaction there are no real barriers containing actions. The ideological actions have "tangible" aspects, and vice-versa.



sources. In effect, I had been working along the same lines as Foucault's theory, but without a centralized theoretical base.

I will briefly outline Foucault's theoretical positions and their links to my data, research, and conclusions. Central to the subjectification of an individual is the ability to separate a potential subject group from the rest of the society. In order to do so, the subject group must be given a personal and social identity. This identity is a symbol of difference. Recognition of this symbol allows members of the society as a whole, including members of the group being subjectified, to understand the key concept of this stage in the subjectification process<sup>83</sup>; people identified by the symbol are different (Kertzer 1988). The recognition of difference allows for the forced separation of the group from the rest of society. For Native Americans, this process culminated in the removal to reservation lands.

The next stage in the process of turning human beings into ideological subjects is about classification and discipline. In short, individuals must be turned into laboratory animals and conditioned into a new way of thinking. The "scientific classification" (Rabinow 1984, 10) of the human subject is the second stage in the subjectification process. In effect, laboratory conditions are created within societal institutions. Institutions are the laboratories, human beings are the experiments, and the scientific method is replaced by bureaucratic systems. The subjects are conditioned by 1) drills and training, 2) the standardization of actions, and 3) the control of space. A control grid is established to monitor and guide the actions of the subjects (Rabinow 1984, 17). The goal of these institutional actions is a "docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved, (Foucault, quoted in Rabinow

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<sup>83</sup> This concept has many levels of meaning. Theoretically, it could range from military action to economic pressure, to politically propagandistic social pressure. For Native Americans, it meant, at different times, all of the above.



1984, 17)." At this point, the subject group is divided into individuals who are constantly monitored, tested, evaluated, and disciplined. The goal is to break the subject's concept of uniqueness of thought, and to create a person who accepts whatever type of knowledge is being enforced through disciplinary actions. "The chief power of the disciplinary power is to train, (Foucault 1984, 188)."

For Native Americans, reservation life was in some ways a system of observation and discipline. As an example, however, it is not as clear as another societal institution, the Federal Boarding School system. It was through this mechanism that the state exerted its power and attempted to break down the bonds that individuals had to their tribal groups. It was the creation of an Indian social category, and corresponding systems of meaning, which was the goal of these systems. At these schools, students were taught to be Americans, but more importantly, they were taught not to be what they were upon entering. "These mechanisms (those which break down pre-existing allegiances) can only be seen as unimportant if one forgets the role of this instrumentation, minor but flawless, in the progressive objectification and the ever more subtle partitioning of individual behavior (Foucault 1984, 191)."

The final stage in the creation of human subjects concerns the processes of self-formation at work by the subjects. This "self-subjectification" firmly grounds the ideology of the society in the culture of the subject group. Self-subjectification is simply, any process by which members of a subject group, through their own actions reify the ideological messages previously enforced upon them by the institutions of societal discipline. Once "released" from the institutions of discipline, the subjects form groups, as defined by similarity. They have been given identities, and group affiliations. The



result is a group made up of people who view themselves as individuals, but whose concept of self is drawn from a notion of self-hood provided by the society. In their actions, these groups replicate the lessons drilled into them by the state. Theoretically, the only common ground that remains between them is what has been instilled by the state. Any form of group identity will have been influenced by the ideology of the state, and its expression will reflect this influence. The result is that actions which support group solidarity strengthen the power base of the society. The new groups follow the directives of the state unconsciously, but nonetheless, by following its directives, they give the state power to govern them. They surrender to the state the power to be governed, and are in effect controlled by the power of the state (Rabinow 1984). The subjects appear to be the ideological sponges, whose existence I earlier questioned, but through this theoretical mode, the mechanisms behind their acceptance of the ideology become clear.

Native American groups participated in this process of self-subjectification. It can be viewed in their visual and text based means of self-expression. By analyzing Native American art and periodicals from this period, I show how Native American identity underwent a transformation. Prior to 1880, the majority of Native American forms of expression focused on tribal allegiance and distinctive group unity. By the end of the period of study, this focus had shifted. Native Americans had become individuals<sup>84</sup> first, and members of tribal units second, at least as from their point of view. Their means of expression showed how they had internalized the ideology of the society, and how they subjected themselves to rule by the society. Processes of identity formation, which had previously expressed tribal, and

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<sup>84</sup>Here, the term individual refers to the notion of Indian as self that I have been discussing. These "individuals" were actually those with a self-concept of themselves as Indians.



therefore national, allegiance in opposition to outside influences, i.e. other tribes, the United States, changed to show allegiance to the society and the tribe simultaneously. By expressing their identity, Native Americans were not freeing themselves from domination, but were instead becoming more deeply entangled in the webs of domination spun by the society, much like a fly in its attempts to break free from a spider's web.

The conclusion to this argument is that Native Americans were created as terminally liminal ideological subjects. They could not fully leave behind their previous social role, nor could they fully embrace the new role that was, at least symbolically, open to them. They were trapped within the levels of the American social hierarchy, without a chance for any large scale mobility. The creation of this category of Indian that I have been discussing was in reality the naming of the liminal stage in Native American history within the United States. Through their methods of control and discipline, the organizational institutions of the American society created a discursive system used to subjectify and control a section of the population in an effort to maintain the existing power structure. The term Indian, and its corresponding social meanings, were really empty, a tool used to create within the Native American community, and in fact, within the rest of society, a concept of Indians as 1) individuals, and 2) as members of an ethnic group with societal position and power. However, as Foucault has suggested, there are no true individuals, but only those whose concept of self is based upon the interests of the organizational system of society. I add to this the notion that the category of Indians is simply the term used to describe the group of liminal, disempowered, non-individuals during the time period of this study.



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