

Custer Died for Your Sins

Vine Deloria, Jr.

Into each life, it is said, some rain must fall. Some people have bad horoscopes; others take tips on the stock market. McNamara created the TFX and the Edsel. American politics has George Wallace. But Indians have been cursed above all other people in history. Indians have anthropologists.

Every summer when school is out, a stream of immigrants heads into Indian country. The Oregon Trail was never as heavily populated as Route 66 and Highway 18 in the summertime. From every rock and cranny in the East, *they* emerge, as if responding to some primeval migratory longing, and flock to the reservations. They are the anthropologists – the most prominent members of the scholarly community that infests the land of the free and the homes of the braves. Their origin is a mystery hidden in the historical mists. Indians are certain that all ancient societies of the Near East had anthropologists at one time, because all those societies are now defunct. They are equally certain that Columbus brought anthropologists on his ships when he came to the New World. How else could he have made so many wrong deductions about where he was? While their origins are uncertain, anthropologists can readily be identified on the reservations. Go into any crowd of people. Pick out a tall, gaunt white man wearing Bermuda shorts, a World War Two Army Air Corps

flying jacket, an Australian bush hat and tennis shoes and packing a large knapsack incorrectly strapped on his back. He will invariably have a thin, sexy wife with stringy hair, an IQ of 191 and a vocabulary in which even the prepositions have 11 syllables. And he usually has a camera, tape recorder, telescope, and life jacket all hanging from his elongated frame.

This odd creature comes to Indian reservations to make *observations*. During the winter, these observations will become books by which future anthropologists will be trained, so that they can come out to reservations years from now and verify the observations in more books, summaries of which then appear in the scholarly journals and serve as a catalyst to inspire yet other anthropologists to make the great pilgrimage the following summer. And so on.

The summaries, meanwhile, are condensed. Some condensations are sent to Government agencies as reports justifying the previous summer's research. Others are sent to foundations, in an effort to finance the following summer's expedition West. The reports are spread through the Government agencies and foundations all winter. The only problem is that no one has time to read them. So \$5,000-a-year secretaries are assigned to decode them. Since these secretaries cannot comprehend complex theories, they reduce the reports to

the best slogans possible. The slogans become conference themes in the early spring, when the anthropological expeditions are being planned. They then turn into battle cries of opposing groups of anthropologists who chance to meet on the reservations the following summer.

Each summer there is a new battle cry, which inspires new insights into the nature of the "Indian problem." One summer Indians will be greeted with the joyful cry "Indians are bilingual!" The following summer this great truth will be expanded to "Indians are not only bilingual, they are *bicultural!*" Biculturalism creates great problems for the opposing anthropological camp. For two summers, they have been bested in sloganeering and their funds are running low. So the opposing school of thought breaks into the clear faster than Gale Sayers. "Indians," the losing anthros cry, "are a *folk* people!" The tide of battle turns and a balance, so dearly sought by Mother Nature, is finally achieved. Thus go the anthropological wars, testing whether this school or that school can long endure. The battlefields, unfortunately, are the lives of Indian people.

The anthro is usually devoted to *pure research*. A 1969 thesis restating a proposition of 1773, complete with footnotes to all material published between 1773 and 1969, is pure research. There are, however, anthropologists who are not clever at collecting footnotes. They depend on their field observations and write long, adventurous narratives in which their personal observations are used to verify their suspicions. Their reports, books and articles are called *applied research*. The difference, then, between pure and applied research is primarily one of footnotes. Pure has many footnotes, applied has few footnotes. Relevancy to subject matter is not discussed in polite company.

Anthropologists came to Indian country only after the tribes had agreed to live on reservations and had given up their warlike ways. Had the tribes been given a choice of fighting the cavalry or the anthropologists, there is little doubt as to who they would have chosen. In a crisis situation, men always attack the biggest threat to their existence. A warrior killed in battle could always go to the happy

hunting grounds. But where does an Indian laid low by an anthro go? To the library?

The fundamental thesis of the anthropologist is that people are objects for observation. It then follows that people are considered objects for experimentation, for manipulation, and for eventual extinction. The anthropologist thus furnishes the justification for treating Indian people like so many chessmen, available for anyone to play with. The mass production of useless knowledge by anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today. After all, who can believe in the actual existence of a food-gathering, berrypicking, seminomadic, fire-worshipping, high-plains-and-mountain-dwelling, horse-riding, canoe-toting, bead-using, pottery-making, ribbon-coveting, wickiup-sheltered people who began flourishing when Alfred Frump mentioned them in 1803 in *Our Feathered Friends*?

Not even Indians can see themselves as this type of creature – who, to anthropologists, is the "real" Indian. Indian people begin to feel that they are merely shadows of a mythical super-Indian. Many Indians, in fact, have come to parrot the ideas of anthropologists, because it appears that they know everything about Indian communities. Thus, many ideas that pass for Indian thinking are in reality theories originally advanced by anthropologists and echoed by Indian people in an attempt to communicate the real situation. Many anthros reinforce this sense of inadequacy in order to further influence the Indian people.

Since 1955, there have been a number of workshops conducted in Indian country as a device for training "young Indian leaders." Churches, white Indian-interest groups, colleges, and, finally, poverty programs have each gone the workshop route as the most feasible means for introducing new ideas to younger Indians, so as to create leaders. The tragic nature of the workshops is apparent when one examines their history. One core group of anthropologists has institutionalized the workshop and the courses taught in it. Trudging valiantly from workshop to workshop, from state to state, college to college, tribe to tribe, these noble spirits have served as the catalyst for the creation of workshops that are identi-

cal in purpose and content and often in the student-body itself.

The anthropological message to young Indians has not varied a jot or a tittle in ten years. It is the same message these anthros learned as fuzzy-cheeked graduate students in the post-War years – Indians are a folk people, whites are an urban people, and never the twain shall meet. Derived from this basic premise are all the other sterling insights: Indians are between two cultures, Indians are bicultural, Indians have lost their identity, and Indians are warriors. These theories, propounded every year with deadening regularity and an overtone of Sinaitic authority, have become a major mental block in the development of young Indian people. For these slogans have come to be excuses for Indian failures. They are crutches by which young Indians have avoided the arduous task of thinking out the implications of the status of Indian people in the modern world.

If there is one single cause that has importance today for Indian people, it is tribalism. Against all odds, Indians have retained title to some 53,000,000 acres of land, worth about three and a half billion dollars. Approximately half of the country's 1,000,000 Indians relate meaningfully to this land, either by living and working on it or by frequently visiting it. If Indians fully recaptured the idea that they are tribes communally in possession of this land, they would realize that they are not truly impoverished. But the creation of modern tribalism has been stifled by a ready acceptance of the Indians-are-a-folk-people premise of the anthropologists. This premise implies a drastic split between folk and urban cultures, in which the folk peoples have two prime characteristics: They dance and they are desperately poor. Creative thought in Indian affairs has not, therefore, come from the younger Indians who have grown up reading and talking to anthropologists. Rather, it has come from the older generation that believes in tribalism – and that the youngsters mistakenly insist has been brainwashed by Government schools.

Because other groups have been spurred on by their younger generations, Indians have come to believe that, through education, a new generation of leaders will arise to solve the pressing contemporary problems. Tribal

leaders have been taught to by the scholarly community of the reservations. Affairs educators harp on this theme. Wherever authority in Indian country, this thesis in fact proves the opposite, that the untouched by anthropologists and scholars are the Apache tribes west. The Mescalero, San Juan Mountain, and Jicarilla Apache young people in college, college tribes. They have even feasted at an annual workshop orgy during the summer. If ever there was a distinction between folk and urban, this group of Indians is it.

The Apaches see themselves as neither folk nor urban but a people in a sense of a lost identity. Apaches worry less about the anthropologists than worry other tribes. Instead of working on massive plans for the future, they themselves have created a life assumed, not defined, by their people. Freedom to choose one's own paths of progress is a cardinal principle of the Apaches; they don't worry about Indianism is real. Above all, they are ego-fed by abstract theories that have been tediously manipulated.

With many young people in Indian country, the situation is quite different. Many Indians attend workshops on tribalism. Folk theories pronounced by anthropologists become a means of escape responsibility. If, in the Indian is hopelessly caught in these theories, why struggle? Why lack of success on this path? The battle between two opposing cultures have become, therefore, a struggle of nonthought rather than strategy and leadership. Therein lies the tragedy of the anthropologist. Only those anthropologists who appear to boast of their theories expound theories dear to their hearts. Workshop Indians are invited to attend workshops. They become hunted by social confusion and are plucked each summer, to the delight of the anthropologist, and refuse to move on into the

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leaders have been taught to accept this thesis by the scholarly community in its annual invasion of the reservations. Bureau of Indian Affairs educators harp continuously on this theme. Wherever authority raises its head in Indian country, this thesis is its message. The facts prove the opposite, however. Relatively untouched by anthropologists, educators, and scholars are the Apache tribes of the Southwest. The Mescalero, San Carlos, White Mountain, and Jicarilla Apaches have very few young people in college, compared with other tribes. They have even fewer people in the annual workshop orgy during the summers. If ever there was a distinction between folk and urban, this group of Indians characterizes it.

The Apaches see themselves, however, as neither folk nor urban but *tribal*. There is little sense of a lost identity. Apaches could not care less about the anthropological dilemmas that worry other tribes. Instead, they continue to work on massive plans for development that they themselves have created. Tribal identity is assumed, not defined, by these reservation people. Freedom to choose from a wide variety of paths of progress is a characteristic of the Apaches; they don't worry about what type of Indianism is real. Above all, they cannot be ego-fed by abstract theories and, hence, unwittingly manipulated.

With many young people from other tribes, the situation is quite different. Some young Indians attend workshops over and over again. Folk theories pronounced by authoritative anthropologists become opportunities to escape responsibility. If, by definition, the Indian is hopelessly caught between two cultures, why struggle? Why not blame all one's lack of success on this tremendous gulf between two opposing cultures? Workshops have become, therefore, summer retreats for nought rather than strategy sessions for leadership. Therein lies the Indian's sin against the anthropologist. Only those anthropologists who appear to boost Indian ego and expound theories dear to the hearts of workshop Indians are invited to teach at workshops. They become human recordings of social confusion and are played and replayed each summer, to the delight of a people who refuse to move on into the real world.

The workshop anthro is thus a unique creature, partially self-created and partially supported by the refusal of Indian young people to consider their problems in their own context. The normal process of maturing has been confused with cultural difference. So maturation is cast aside in favor of cult recitation of great truths that appear to explain the immaturity of young people.

While the anthro is thus, in a sense, the victim of the Indians, he should, nevertheless, recognize the role he has been asked to play and refuse to play it. Instead, the temptation to appear relevant to a generation of young Indians has clouded his sense of proportion. Workshop anthros often ask Indians of tender age to give their authoritative answers to problems that an entire generation of Indians is just now beginning to solve. Where the answer to reservation health problems may be adequate housing in areas where there has never been adequate housing, young Indians are shaped in their thinking processes to consider vague doctrines on the nature of man and his society.

It is preposterous that a teen-aged Indian should become an instant authority, equal in status to the PhD interrogating him. Yet the very human desire is to play that game every summer, for the status acquired in the game is heady. And since answers can be given only in the vocabulary created by the PhD, the entire leadership-training process internalizes itself and has no outlet beyond the immediate group. Real problems, superimposed on the ordinary problems of maturing, thus become insoluble burdens that crush people of great leadership potential.

Let us take some specific examples. One workshop discussed the thesis that Indians were in a terrible crisis. They were, in the words of friendly anthro guides, "between two worlds." People between two worlds, the students were told, "drank." For the anthropologist, it was a valid explanation of drinking on the reservation. For the young Indians, it was an authoritative definition of their role as Indians. Real Indians, they began to think, drank; and their task was to become real Indians, for only in that way could they recreate the glories of the past. So they *drank*. I've lost some good friends who drank too much.

Abstract theories create abstract action. Lumping together the variety of tribal problems and seeking the demonic principle at work that is destroying Indian people may be intellectually satisfying, but it does not change the situation. By concentrating on great abstractions, anthropologists have unintentionally removed many young Indians from the world of real problems to the lands of make-believe.

As an example of a real problem, the Pyramid Lake Paiutes and the Gila River Pima and Maricopa are poor because they have been systematically cheated out of their water rights, and on desert reservations, water is the single most important factor in life. No matter how many worlds Indians straddle, the Plains Indians have an inadequate land base that continues to shrink because of land sales. Straddling worlds is irrelevant to straddling small pieces of land and trying to earn a living.

Along the Missouri River, the Sioux used to live in comparative peace and harmony. Although land allotments were small, families were able to achieve a fair standard of living through a combination of gardening and livestock raising and supplemental work. Little cash income was required, because the basic necessities of food, shelter, and community life were provided. After World War Two, anthropologists came to call. They were horrified that the Indians didn't carry on their old customs, such as dancing, feasts, and giveaways. In fact, the people did keep up a substantial number of customs, but they had been transposed into church gatherings, participation in the county fairs, and tribal celebrations, particularly fairs and rodeos. The people did Indian dances. But they didn't do them all the time.

Suddenly, the Sioux were presented with an authority figure who bemoaned the fact that whenever he visited the reservations, the Sioux were not out dancing in the manner of their ancestors. Today, the summers are taken up with one great orgy of dancing and celebrating, as each small community of Indians sponsors a weekend powwow for the people in the surrounding communities. Gone are the little gardens that used to provide fresh vegetables in the summer and canned goods in the winter. Gone are the chickens that provided eggs and

Sunday dinners. In the winter, the situation becomes critical for families who spent the summer dancing. While the poverty programs have done much to counteract the situation, few Indians recognize that the condition was artificial from start to finish. The people were innocently led astray, and even the anthropologists did not realize what had happened.

One example: The Oglala Sioux are perhaps the most well known of the Sioux bands. Among their past leaders were Red Cloud, the only Indian who ever defeated the United States in a war, and Crazy Horse, most revered of the Sioux war chiefs. The Oglala were, and perhaps still are, the meanest group of Indians ever assembled. They would take after a cavalry troop just to see if their bowstrings were taut enough. When they had settled on the reservation, the Oglala made a fairly smooth transition to the new life. They had good herds of cattle, they settled along the numerous creeks that cross the reservation, and they created a very strong community spirit. The Episcopalians and the Roman Catholics had the missionary franchise on the reservation and the tribe was pretty evenly split between the two. In the Episcopal Church, at least, the congregations were fairly self-governing and stable.

But over the years, the Oglala Sioux have had a number of problems. Their population has grown faster than their means of support. The Government allowed white farmers to come into the eastern part of the reservation and create a county, with the best farmlands owned or operated by whites. The reservation was allotted – taken out of the collective hands of the tribe and parceled out to individuals – and when ownership became too complicated, control of the land passed out of Indian hands. The Government displaced a number of families during World War Two by taking a part of the reservation for use as a bombing range to train crews for combat. Only last year was this land returned to tribal and individual use.

The tribe became a favorite subject for anthropological study quite early, because of its romantic past. Theories arose attempting to explain the apparent lack of progress of the Oglala Sioux. The true issue – white control of

the reservation – was over. Instead, every conceivable distinction was used to explain economic, social, and educational problems of people who were, to all intents and purposes, absentee landlords because of the government policy of leasing their land.

One study advanced the notion that Indians with many wives were, on average, better off than Indians with one. In the case of the Cattle Indians, it seems, had a higher income than did noncattle Indians. The study had innumerable flaws, but it demonstrated this great truth: that doubt of a reasonably prudent conclusion of this type were common but that certain flairs of opinion were lacking that certain flairs of opinion were by anthropologists. Then another anthropologist advanced the notion that was valid at the time and in the future. He advanced it, that the Oglala were without weapons."

The chase was on. Before long, the scholarly journals were filled with articles from every library stack that had ever converged on the Oglala Sioux. The theory. Outfitting anthropology became the number-one industry on the off-reservation Nebraska territory. Pine Ridge. Surely, supplying the needs of the Holy Land was a mission. The task of keeping the Pine Ridge.

Every conceivable difference between the Oglala Sioux and the folks who lived on the reservation was attributed to the quaint ways of the Oglala Sioux. From the lack of unshined shoes, Sioux people were attributed, so the anthros discovered, of the white man to recognize the Oglala to go to work. The Oglala to become a small town. He was only waiting for the turn to come around the bend? human problems of the reservation considered to be merely by-products of a warrior people to become. The fairly respectable thesis that war, perhaps romanticized, poses, became a spiritual issue. Some Indians, in a tongue-tied

Sunday dinners. In the winter, the situation becomes critical for families who spent the summer dancing. While the poverty programs have done much to counteract the situation, few Indians recognize that the condition was artificial from start to finish. The people were innocently led astray, and even the anthropologists did not realize what had happened.

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But over the years, the Oglala Sioux have had a number of problems. Their population has grown faster than their means of support. The Government allowed white farmers to come into the eastern part of the reservation and create a county, with the best farmlands owned or operated by whites. The reservation was allotted – taken out of the collective hands of the tribe and parceled out to individuals – and when ownership became too complicated, control of the land passed out of Indian hands. The Government displaced a number of families during World War Two by taking a part of the reservation for use as a bombing range to train crews for combat. Only last year was this land returned to tribal and individual use.

The tribe became a favorite subject for anthropological study quite early, because of its romantic past. Theories arose attempting to explain the apparent lack of progress of the Oglala Sioux. The true issue – white control of

the reservation – was overlooked completely. Instead, every conceivable intangible cultural distinction was used to explain the lack of economic, social, and educational progress of a people who were, to all intents and purposes, absentee landlords because of the Government policy of leasing their lands to whites.

One study advanced the startling proposition that Indians with many cattle were, on the average, better off than Indians without cattle. Cattle Indians, it seems, had more capital and income than did noncattle Indians. Surprise! The study had innumerable charts and graphs that demonstrated this great truth beyond the doubt of a reasonably prudent man. Studies of this type were common but unexciting. They lacked that certain flair of insight so beloved by anthropologists. Then one day a famous anthropologist advanced the theory, probably valid at the time and in the manner in which he advanced it, that the Oglala were “warriors without weapons.”

The chase was on. Before the ink had dried on the scholarly journals, anthropologists from every library stack in the nation converged on the Oglala Sioux to test this new theory. Outfitting anthropological expeditions became the number-one industry of the small off-reservation Nebraska towns south of Pine Ridge. Surely, supplying the Third Crusade to the Holy Land was a minor feat compared with the task of keeping the anthropologists at Pine Ridge.

Every conceivable difference between the Oglala Sioux and the folks at Bar Harbor was attributed to the quaint warrior tradition of the Oglala Sioux. From lack of roads to unshined shoes, Sioux problems were generated, so the anthros discovered, by the refusal of the white man to recognize the great desire of the Oglala to go to war. Why expect an Oglala to become a small businessman, when he was only waiting for that wagon train to come around the bend? The very real and human problems of the reservation were considered to be merely by-products of the failure of a warrior people to become domesticated. The fairly respectable thesis of past exploits in war, perhaps romanticized for morale purposes, became a spiritual force all its own. Some Indians, in a tongue-in-cheek manner for

which Indians are justly famous, suggested that a subsidized wagon train be run through the reservation each morning at nine o'clock and the reservation people paid a minimum wage for attacking it.

By outlining this problem, I am not deriding the Sioux. I lived on that reservation for 18 years and know many of the problems from which it suffers. How, I ask, can the Oglala Sioux make any headway in education when their lack of education is ascribed to a desire to go to war? Would not, perhaps, an incredibly low per-capita income, virtually nonexistent housing, extremely inadequate roads, and domination by white farmers and ranchers make some difference? If the little Sioux boy or girl had no breakfast, had to walk miles to a small school, and had no decent clothes nor place to study in a one-room log cabin, should the level of education be comparable with that of Scarsdale High?

What use would roads, houses, schools, businesses, and income be to a people who, everyone expected, would soon depart on the warpath? I would submit that a great deal of the lack of progress at Pine Ridge is occasioned by people who believe they are helping the Oglala when they insist on seeing, in the life of the people of that reservation, only those things they want to see. Real problems and real people become invisible before the great romantic and nonsensical notion that the Sioux yearn for the days of Crazy Horse and Red Cloud and will do nothing until those days return.

The question of the Oglala Sioux is one that plagues every Indian tribe in the nation, if it will closely examine itself. Tribes have been defined; the definition has been completely explored; test scores have been advanced promoting and deriding the thesis; and, finally, the conclusion has been reached: Indians must be redefined in terms that white men will accept, even if that means re-Indianizing them according to the white man's idea of what they were like in the past and should logically become in the future.

What, I ask, would a school board in Moline, Illinois – or Skokie, even – do if the scholarly community tried to reorient its educational system to conform with outmoded ideas of Sweden in the glory days of Gustavus

Adolphus? Would they be expected to sing "*Ein feste Burg*" and charge out of the mists at the Roman Catholics to save the Reformation every morning as school began? Or the Irish – would they submit to a group of Indians coming to Boston and telling them to dress in green and hunt leprechauns?

Consider the implications of theories put forward to solve the problem of poverty among the blacks. Several years ago, the word went forth that black poverty was due to the disintegration of the black family, that the black father no longer had a prominent place in the home. How incredibly shortsighted that thesis was. How typically Anglo-Saxon! How in the world could there have been a black family if people were sold like cattle for 200 years, if there were large plantations that served merely as farms to breed more slaves, if white owners systematically ravaged black women? When did the black family unit ever become integrated? Herein lies a trap into which many Americans have fallen: Once a problem is defined and understood by a significant number of people who have some relation to it, the fallacy goes, the problem ceases to exist. The rest of America had better beware of having quaint mores that attract anthropologists, or it will soon become a victim of the conceptual prison into which blacks and Indians, among others, have been thrown. One day you may find yourself cataloged – perhaps as a credit-card-carrying, turnpike-commuting, condominium-dwelling, fraternity-joining, church-going, sports-watching, time-purchase-buying, television-watching, magazine-subscribing, politically inert transmigrated urbanite who, through the phenomenon of the second car and the shopping center, has become a golf-playing, wife-swapping, etc., etc., etc., suburbanite. Or have you already been characterized – and caricatured – in ways that struck you as absurd? If so, you will understand what has been happening to Indians for a long, long time.

In defense of the anthropologists, it must be recognized that those who do not publish perish. Those who do not bring in a substantial sum of research money soon slide down the scale of university approval. What university is not equally balanced between the actual education of its students and a multitude of

small bureaus, projects, institutes, and programs that are designed to harvest grants for the university?

The effect of anthropologists on Indians should be clear. Compilation of useless knowledge for knowledge's sake should be utterly rejected by the Indian people. We should not be objects of observation for those who do nothing to help us. During the critical days of 1954, when the Senate was pushing for termination of all Indian rights, not one scholar, anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or economist came forward to support the tribes against the detrimental policy. Why didn't the academic community march to the side of the tribes? Certainly the past few years have shown how much influence academe can exert when it feels compelled to enlist in a cause. Is Vietnam any more crucial to the moral stance of America than the great debt owed to the Indian tribes?

Perhaps we should suspect the motives of members of the academic community. They have the Indian field well defined and under control. Their concern is not the ultimate policy that will affect the Indian people, but merely the creation of new slogans and doctrines by which they can climb the university totem pole. Reduction of people to statistics for purposes of observation appears to be inconsequential to the anthropologist when compared with the immediate benefits he can derive – the acquisition of further prestige and the chance to appear as the high priest of American society, orienting and manipulating to his heart's desire.

Roger Jourdain, chairman of the Red Lake Chippewa tribe of Minnesota, casually had the anthropologists escorted from his reservation a couple of years ago. This was the tip of the iceberg. If only more Indians had the insight of Jourdain. Why should we continue to provide private zoos for anthropologists? Why should tribes have to compete with scholars for funds, when their scholarly productions are so useless and irrelevant to life?

Several years ago, an anthropologist stated that over a period of some 20 years he had spent, from all sources, close to \$10,000,000 studying a tribe of fewer than 1000 people. Imagine what that amount of money would have meant to that group of people had it been

invested in buildings and would have been no problem.

I sometimes think that I improve relations between the anthropologists by adopting a policy: Each anthro desiring should be made to apply to me for permission to do his study. Given such permission only a contribution to the tribal budget, money equal to the amount he spends on his study. Anthropologists thus become productive members of society, instead of ideologists.

This proposal was discussed in Indian circles. It blew no one's anthro minds. Irrational "shamanic freedom" rose like rocket pads. The very idea of putting information was intolerable to the anthropologists we talked with. But the idea is simple. Are the anthropologists given freedom – or license? Academe certainly does not imply that one has to become chessmen for the people. Why should Indians be subjected to prying non-Indian eyes in other communities? Should the franchise to stick its nose in be a business?

I don't think my proposal would be accepted. It contradicts the anthropologist's self-image much too strongly. It is likely that Indians will be given their communities to be turned over to them. Then they will be given no further knowledge – will be created otherwise – will be created otherwise. Once, at a Con, someone asked Alex Chasin, a member of the Cheyenne Sioux, "Just what do you Indians want?" He replied, "A leave-us-alone law."

The primary goal and need is not for someone to study us, identify with us, or classify us. Pocahontas to make us feel we need to be classified as separate programs made to bleach us. Do we need further studies? "feasible." We need, instead,

small bureaus, projects, institutes, and programs that are designed to harvest grants for the university?

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Several years ago, an anthropologist stated that over a period of some 20 years he had spent, from all sources, close to \$10,000,000 studying a tribe of fewer than 1000 people. Imagine what that amount of money would have meant to that group of people had it been

invested in buildings and businesses. There would have been no problems to study.

I sometimes think that Indian tribes could improve relations between themselves and the anthropologists by adopting the following policy: Each anthro desiring to study a tribe should be made to apply to the tribal council for permission to do his study. He would be given such permission only if he raised as a contribution to the tribal budget an amount of money equal to the amount he proposed to spend on his study. Anthropologists would thus become productive members of Indian society, instead of ideological vultures.

This proposal was discussed at one time in Indian circles. It blew no small number of anthro minds. Irrational shrieks of "academic freedom" rose like rockets from launching pads. The very idea of putting a tax on useless information was intolerable to the anthropologists we talked with. But the question is very simple. Are the anthros concerned about freedom – or license? Academic freedom certainly does not imply that one group of people has to become chessmen for another group of people. Why should Indian communities be subjected to prying non-Indians any more than other communities? Should any group have a franchise to stick its nose into someone else's business?

I don't think my proposal ever will be accepted. It contradicts the anthropologists' self-image much too strongly. What is more likely is that Indians will continue to allow their communities to be turned inside out until they come to realize the damage that is being done to them. Then they will seal up the reservations and no further knowledge – useless or otherwise – will be created. This may be the best course. Once, at a Congressional hearing, someone asked Alex Chasing Hawk, a council member of the Cheyenne Sioux for 30 years, "Just what do you Indians want?" Alex replied, "A leave-us-alone law."

The primary goal and need of Indians today is not for someone to study us, feel sorry for us, identify with us, or claim descent from Pocahontas to make us feel better. Nor do we need to be classified as semiwhite and have programs made to bleach us further. Nor do we need further studies to see if we are "feasible." We need, instead, a new policy

from Congress that acknowledges our intelligence, and our dignity.

In its simplest form, such a policy would give a tribe the amount of money now being spent in the area on Federal schools and other services. With this block grant, the tribe itself would communally establish and run its own schools and hospitals and police and fire departments – and, in time, its own income-producing endeavors, whether in industry or agriculture. The tribe would not be taxed until enough capital had accumulated so that individual Indians were getting fat dividends.

Many tribes are beginning to acquire the skills necessary for this sort of independence, but the odds are long: An Indian district at Pine Ridge was excited recently about the possibility of running its own schools, and a bond issue was put before them that would have made it possible for them to do so. In the

meantime, however, anthropologists visiting the community convinced its people that they were culturally unprepared to assume this sort of responsibility; so the tribe voted down the bond issue. Three universities have sent teams to the area to discover why the issue was defeated. The teams are planning to spend more on their studies than the bond issue would have cost.

I would expect an instant rebuttal by the anthros. They will say that my sentiments do not represent the views of all Indians – and they are right, they have brainwashed many of my brothers. But a new day is coming. Until then, it would be wise for anthropologists to climb down from their thrones of authority and pure research and begin helping Indian tribes instead of preying on them. For the wheel of karma grinds slowly, but it does grind fine. And it makes a complete circle.

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Here Come the Anthros

Cecil King

N'dahwemahdik giye n'weehkahnisdok g'dahnamikohnim meenwa dush g'meeget-chiwinim geeweekomiyek monpee nongo weenashamigabwitohnigok djigeegidotamah manda enjimowndjidihying. -N'geekahwe bigossehnimah dush Wo kinah gego netawtot, weebi-weedji-yawryung, weemeezhiyung nihb-wakahwin meenwa dash nah gihnihgehnah n'dahkidowinan djiminokahgohwing, mee gahzhi bigossehdahmah . . . My sisters and my brothers I greet you and also I thank you for inviting me to speak to the topic at hand. As I was preparing my thoughts, I begged the Maker of all things to be among us, to give us some wisdom and also maybe to make my works be as a medicine for us all – those were my thoughts.

We, as Indian people, have welcomed strangers into our midst. We have welcomed all who came with intellectual curiosity or in the guise of the informed student. We have honored those whom we have seen grow in their knowledge and understanding of our ways. But unfortunately, many times we have been betrayed. Our honored guests have shown themselves to be no more than peeping toms, rank opportunists, interested in furthering their own careers by trading in our sacred traditions. Many of our people have felt anger at the way our communities have been cheated, held up to ridicule, and our customs sensa-

tionalized. Singer Floyd Wee, for example, expressed this in a recording of "Here Come the Anthros."

We have been observed, videotaped. Our behaviors have been analyzed every possible way known to science and I suppose we could learn something if we had not become inured to anthropologists' words. The categories anthropologists use to explain human linguistic cages because we are trapped in ways through alien hypothesis and theoretical frameworks. *mahdzowin* must be described in terms of culture, economics, politics, and must segment, fragment, fragment, a hole that which we hold together. *d'opwahganinan*, becomes a religious symbol, a political statement, a mnemonic device, an icon.

We have to describe our lives in *d'ochichaugwunan*, to fit academic packages, and we have been told what academics have done for us. We verify their words. We want time, money, luxury, and respect to establish credibility to define our own lives within our own languages and in our own time.

We struggle as contemporary American and Inuit peoples to unlock