

“Indigeneity at the Crossroads of American Studies”

Introduction

“To Feel the Drumming Earth Come Upward”: Indigenizing the American Studies Discipline, Field, Movement

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It was a time of pleasure, to be riding in the early morning air, to feel the drumming earth come upward through the pony’s legs and enter his own flesh. Yes, the earth power coming into him as he moved over it. And a thing of the air, like a bird. He breathed deeply of the bird-air, and that was power too. He held his head high, a being in flight. And he sang, as his people sang To be among his people, to grow up in their respect, to be his grandfather’s kinsman—this was a power in itself, the power that flows between people and makes them one. He could feel it now, a healing warmth that flowed into his center from many-reaching body parts. Still, he had no shell of hardness around him. He was going into a country where danger would be waiting It was uncertain territory, this country of government buildings and government kind of people. D’Arcy McNickle, *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (1978)

In the selection above, excerpted from D'Arcy McNickle's novel *Wind from an Enemy Sky*, a returned government boarding school student rides from his uncle's foothills camp toward the Little Elk Indian Agency, a place where colonial agents use the apparatus of empire to compel his mountain-based relatives to abandon entirely their unique peoplehood and adopt foreign ways of being in their world. As the returned student descends once again "into a country where danger would be waiting"—into "uncertain territory"—he does so this time knowingly armed not with "a shell of hardness around him," but rather with "a healing warmth that flowed into his center from many-reaching body parts."¹ In a moment of imminent vulnerability, the returned student is re-centered in his first world and re-created as an original person. He is reverentially aware that "many-reaching body parts"—the wellsprings authorizing his primary reality—include his Indigenous relatives, their songs and ceremonies, and his first language, as well as the holy territory into which his Maker moved his people at the end of their creation.² Thus, at the crossroads where divergent realities meet, he is neither alone nor defenseless.

We open with *Wind from an Enemy Sky* to illustrate the dynamics of power at the crossroads where Indigenous and American studies meet, as well as to introduce the necessary shift in the intellectual authority for academic forms of indigeneity from Western humanism and social science to Indigenous ways of knowing. Although at this time there is no broad consensus on the signifier—indigeneity, peoplehood, or Indigenous intellectual interdisciplines—used to represent what informs Antoine Brown's transformation on his ride to the Little Elk Indian Agency, the matter being signified nonetheless constitutes Indigenous studies scholarship in ways that sets it apart from scholarship produced exclusively from the authority in which established academic traditions are grounded.³ At the intersections of Indigenous and American studies, the interdisciplines of Original Peoples⁴—the myriad ways of knowing among Indigenous Peoples informed by ceremonial cycles, relationships with particular geographical locations, sacred histories, and Indigenous languages—encounter established academic disciplines (such as history) and transdisciplines (such as American studies) that too often have been co-conspirators in the colonization of Indigenous Peoples.⁵ Today the academy is confronted by a profound transformation precisely because of "peoples" politics and as a consequence of efforts to decolonize and indigenize the academy from work grounded in the authority of Indigenous intellectual interdisciplines.⁶ Over the course of forty years, since the emergence of academic Indigenous studies, matters of critical importance to Indigenous Peoples have leapt from the margins of established disciplines, where Western ways of knowing have assumed to speak for Indigenous Peoples, to inform a rapidly evolving, transformative, and dynamic intellectual order.

Thus, in the present moment, Indigenous academics and activists and their/our allies participate together in efforts to re-locate the intellectual authority

and subject matter for research, and are grounding this authority in the interdisciplines of Indigenous Peoples—in indigeneity.⁷ Precisely because colonization is residual and ongoing, as Waziyatawin Angela Wilson emphasizes in *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives*, a basic and binding responsibility for active Indigenous scholars is “to bring to our communities useful ways of thinking about our experiences and co-creating a culture of resistance based both on the recovery of Indigenous knowledge and traditional means of resistance as well as the useful theoretical frameworks and language from outside of our cultures that can assist us in our struggle.”⁸ For Wilson and others (including her non-Indigenous allies), research located in the restorative authority of indigeneity or peoplehood—in the regenerative potential of Indigenous intellectual interdisciplines—has “a transformative power, not just for Dakota people or Indigenous Peoples in general, but also for the world.”⁹

As indigeneity promises to create in the twenty-first century academy an inclusive and regenerative space where Indigenous interdisciplines are both self-determining and share intellectual authority with established academic ways of knowing, the project of reflecting on its academic origins and existing currency is imperative. In 1965 the *Midcontinent American Studies Journal (MASJ)*, predecessor to *American Studies*, published a special issue, “The Indian Today,” co-edited by the journal’s regular editor, Stuart Levine, and a guest editor, anthropologist Nancy Lurie.¹⁰ The issue sought both to examine the contemporary cultural persistence of American Indian peoples and to comprehend the stirrings of social and political change—what Lurie termed a “renaissance”—then being felt throughout Indian Country.¹¹ A relatively new journal (its first issue appeared in 1959), the bi-annual *MASJ* was sponsored by the Midcontinent American Studies Association (MASA), arguably the most active (and boisterous) regional American studies chapter in the country (MASA was the organizer, sponsor, and host of the first national American Studies Association meeting in 1967 in Kansas City), and its establishment reflected the burgeoning post-World War II interest in the interdisciplinary study of American society and culture. Although many scholars fancied their participation in the self-consciously interdisciplinary American studies movement to be a radical challenge to existing departmental boundaries within the academy, prior to the mid-1960s most discourse by “Americanists” (the term with which many referred to themselves) involved the disciplines of American literature and history, and their primary substantive focus was on mainstream (raced white, but racially unmarked) American culture.¹² The quest to identify what was both distinctively and essentially “American” led many of the most prominent and able scholars of the American experience to invoke notions of an underlying, unitary, and unifying American “mind,” “culture,” or “character.” In a classic articulation of the underlying paradigm of post-World War II American studies, Henry Nash Smith, whose

Virgin Land (1950) was one of the nascent movement's most important exemplars, contended that the objective of American studies should be "the study of American culture, past and present, *as a whole*."¹³

The emphasis on achieving a holistic, macroscopic perspective on American society and culture so integral to the post-World War II American studies paradigm resulted in a nearly exclusive focus on mainstream, dominant Euro-American culture and power that left little room for the consideration of non-white American racial and ethnic groups in general and American Indians, in particular (then widely understood solely as an ethnic group—or groups—and a race).¹⁴ Publication of the *MASJ* special issue on American Indians was therefore in several respects a dramatic departure in American studies discourse. Indeed, if its two leading journals (*American Quarterly*, the official publication of the American Studies Association, and *MASJ*) were any indication, one would be compelled to conclude that few, if any, American studies scholars recognized or considered the existence of American Indians (even as a visible "race"); in their combined twenty-one years of publication prior to the special issue in 1965, neither *AQ* nor *MASJ* had published a single article on American Indians and American life.¹⁵

Second, as suggested above, although social scientists had served on the editorial boards of both *AQ* and *MASJ*, the primary thrust of material published in them remained concerned with topics and issues from the established disciplines of American history and literature. By contrast, with the exception of editor Stuart Levine, whose training was in American civilization, all of the contributors to "The Indian Today," were anthropologists,¹⁶ two of whom (Robert K. Thomas and Shirley Hill Witt) identified as American Indians (Oklahoma Cherokee and Akwesasne Mohawk, Wolf Clan, respectively).¹⁷

Finally, the issue's contemporary focus contrasted with the emphasis on the past in most American studies scholarship. Even among scholars who approached American studies through American literature, the primary emphasis of their scholarship was American literary *history*. In other words, the overwhelming historical focus of American studies scholarship between 1950 and 1965 resulted in a dearth of attention to contemporary American culture and society. Thus, not only did the *MASJ* special issue bring American Indians prominently into the Americanist discourse on the United States, but its primary focus on the lives and experiences of *contemporary* Indian peoples extended the temporal parameters of American studies discourse as well. In a lengthy review essay in a 1966 issue of *The Nation*, D'Arcy McNickle, one of North America's most respected Indigenous scholars,¹⁸ praised the special issue precisely because it "attempt[ed] to let the Indian stand forth as a person and a group member in our contemporary industrialized society—to give some meaning to the values that operate in Indian life," and he used his appreciative review of the issue as a springboard with which to survey changes he saw emerging among Indigenous Peoples and to critique the failure of the Kennedy Administration to curtail

effectively the effects of the ill-fated termination policies adopted during the 1950s.¹⁹ Clearly topics and concerns that the special issue addressed had struck a responsive chord—at least among the generation of Indigenous scholars represented by McNickle.

In 1968, Everett Edwards Press published an extensively revised and expanded version of “The Indian Today” under the title *The American Indian Today*.²⁰ This edition contained a new introduction by Levine and an historical overview by Lurie that broadly contextualized the remaining articles. Although all of the contributors except Levine were anthropologists, the book was not well received by George Spindler, the reviewer for the *American Anthropologist*, who declared that “it is not clear what is anthropological about the book.” While acknowledging that it provided “an outlook on the contemporary status, involvements, attitudes, and ongoing adaptations of American Indians that . . . is unavailable elsewhere,” Spindler condemned it for the absence of an overarching conceptual or theoretical structure and for the absence of self-conscious attention to methodological rigor, and he hoped that in future studies of American Indians, “we will manage to keep our interdisciplinary identity as anthropologists intact.”²¹

Spindler’s reservations were not universally shared. In 1969 *The American Indian Today* was one of four books published in 1968 to receive the prestigious Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, conferred annually by the Cleveland Foundation to books “that have made important contributions to our understanding of racism or our appreciation of the rich diversity of human cultures.” The awards committee was comprised of anthropologist Ashley Montagu (chair), Nobel Prize-winning novelist Pearl Buck, and historian Oscar Handlin. Sharing the 1969 prize were Gwendolyn Brooks’ *In the Mecca*; E. Earl Baughman and W. Grant Dahlstrom’s *Negro and White Children*; and Leonard Dinnerstein’s *The Leo Frank Case*.²² *The American Indian Today* was cited for its efforts to show “the variety and complexity of the Indian heritage” and to correct “the notion that the Indians lived in an idyllic state before the white man came and that eventually they will become either extinct or assimilated.” “Far from disappearing,” the reporter summarizing the awards wrote in the *Saturday Review*, “Indian communities are growing, and so is their desire to strengthen their ethnic distinctiveness. [*The American Indian Today*] affirm[s] the strong Indian wish to be considered separately and not thrown into a pool of civil-rights seekers.”²³

In his article in this issue, “Unspeaking the Settler: ‘The Indian Today’ in International Perspective,” Chadwick Allen contextualizes the 1965 special issue within broader patterns of emerging—or at least potential—global decolonization and assertions of indigeneity.²⁴ He notes that publication of “The Indian Today” in 1965 paralleled what he terms “similar overview texts” produced contemporaneously in the new state of Hawai’i, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand—in what he characterizes as “historically-situated international discourses about indigenous-settler relations.” Thus contextualized, Allen ar-

gues that “The Indian Today” “becomes more obvious a locus of primarily non-Native (not exclusively or exceptionally U.S.) obsessions, limitations, and contingencies” and “a site of self-erasure by the dominant culture and by dominant power . . . in which the term ‘settler’, from the indigenous-settler binary, is *unspoken* by predominantly non-Native academic researchers and writers” (emphasis in the original).

This special issue of *American Studies*, published in conjunction with *Indigenous Studies Today*, seeks to use the fortieth anniversary of the publication of “The Indian Today” as an opportunity to revisit and review issues raised in that publication and to assess the continuities and changes in the lives, experiences, identities, and status (legal, political, cultural, demographic, social, economic, and educational) of Indigenous Peoples, particularly those peoples dealing with the colonial structures and cultures of the United States and Canada. The editors’ shared concern has been to bring both broad syntheses as well as specific case studies to the interdisciplinary audiences of both journals. The call for papers encouraged submissions on a wide range of topics, including, but not limited to, retrospective and critical assessments of the 1965 publication, “The Indian Today” and the perspectives concerning Indigenous Peoples and American multiculturalism that it reflected; examination of the status of Indigenous Peoples’ relationships with federal, state, and local governments (including issues of land, sovereignty, and survivance) and with national and global legal, social, economic, and political forces; cross-national and comparative studies of Indigenous Peoples throughout the Americas; and representations of Indigenous Peoples (in literary texts and visual and popular culture).

Forty years after publication of “The Indian Today,” contributors to “Indigeneity at the Crossroads of American Studies” bring a variety of academic perspectives from established disciplines (such as anthropology) and transdisciplines (such as ethnic studies, women’s studies, and American studies) to bear on an assortment of specific disciplinary and interdisciplinary methodological and theoretical concerns. A number of contributors whose work is informed at least in part by Indigenous interdisciplines are unapologetically concerned with the inter-related matters of building Indigenous nations and nourishing Indigenous intellectual traditions in the academy. All are at least to some degree concerned with the problem of representation (in terms of who and what stands in to inform, represent, and otherwise speak for Indigenous Peoples). Some call on their readers to rethink hegemonic constructs (such as race and citizenship, modernity and “progress,” colonialism and decolonization) and academic histories (such as the intellectual origins of American studies) in which Indigenous Peoples and ways of knowing have, until now, played unacknowledged roles. Others are concerned less directly with the welfare and interests of Original Peoples and more with reflecting on the Indian sign as it is variously manifested both in popular culture (for instance, in cinema, at theme parks, and

as toys) and in the “high” culture of the academy (as distinguished from popular culture) in two ways: as a sort of pedagogy that mis-educates, misinforms, and defames *and* as an object with which Indigenous artists and performers actively are engaged.

Five authors to this issue of *American Studies* and *Indigenous Studies Today* are concerned with the politics and poetics of representations of Indigenous Peoples in mass media and popular culture (Cynthia-Lou Coleman), toy manufacturing (Maureen Trudelle Schwarz), amusement parks (David Kamper), museums (John Bloom), and traveling art exhibits (Phoebe Farris). In her article, “Visual Power: 21st Century Native American Artists/Intellectuals,” Farris reviews a U.S. Department of State-sponsored traveling exhibit (which she curated), in her words, “to explore the interconnections of being both a Native American artist and a scholar.” Through different approaches (ethnography and a close textual reading), Kamper, in “American Studies, Ethnography, and Knowledge Production: The Case of American Indian Performers at Knott’s Berry Farm,” and Bloom, in his exhibition review of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian, explore the difficulties of reconciling indigeneity—Indigenous ways of knowing and being—for what principally are non-Indigenous audiences/consumers with widely resonating and already pre-conceived assumptions and expectations about “Indians,” saturated with, in Bloom’s words, “five centuries of received images and stereotypes.”

That the intellectual authority for the “Indian sign” is located among fantasies constituted by colonialism’s culture and not from the cultural authority that constitutes Original Peoples, we believe, cannot be overstated. Beginning with the representation of Indigenous Peoples as “merciless Indian savages” in the *Declaration of Independence*, the Indian sign has functioned to replace actual Indigenous Peoples with “Indians,” thereby legitimizing unfree trade, war, massacre, enslavement, forced relocation, proselytization, land transfer, legal restrictions, child abduction and compulsory education, and imprisonment for violating the colonial will. Today, countless markings, symbols, words, bodies, representations, depictions, and characterizations in popular culture and in the high culture of the academy are immediately and widely recognized as “Indian.” Numerous forms and varieties of this “Indian” sign move as commodities, imaginations, and musings from their points of production into communities of differently-positioned consumers. They do so across borders and checkpoints and within the global marketplace. And they conjure up a complex framework of visual imagery, stereotypes, and assumptions that explain the place of Indigenous Peoples in the making of the United States and the “American” people, as well as in the making of Canada and Canadians.²⁵ By means of what Lumbee Tribe citizen Robert A. Williams, Jr. designates as “languages of racism,” the Indian sign informs legal decisions as well as legislation and policy. It shapes social relations and the terms by which Indigenous Peoples participate in Western democracies. As Philip Deloria has demonstrated in *Indians in Un-*

expected Places, it functions as a sort of pedagogy that breeds widely-shared and resonating expectations that can have disastrous consequences for actual Indigenous Peoples.²⁶

The articles included in “Indigeneity at the Crossroads of American Studies” demonstrate substantial methodological and theoretical diversity, and they differ as well in their specific subject matters and in their politics. Nonetheless, three core concerns are prominent: the issue of theorizing and “living” sovereignty, the problem of raced frameworks (including ethnic studies epistemologies), and the question of re-locating American studies with Indians/Original Peoples at the center.

Conceptualizing sovereignty—the inherent right to self-determination—is a fundamental project of Indigenous studies.²⁷ This project, manifest in a resurgence in self-government and the arts and languages, is central in several contributions to this special issue. In “The Contemporary Revival and Diffusion of Indigenous Sovereignty Discourse,” for instance, Erich Steinman demonstrates that Indigenous activists and tribal leaders who provoked profound changes in federal discourse during the 1970s and, well into the 1980s, contributed to “the rise of *sovereignty talk* outside of federal policymaking . . . through the creative promotion of a sovereignty framework [and] also by assertively building a new reality in which tribal sovereignty was manifested” (*italics added*). Chickasaw Nation citizen Amanda Cobb broadly surveys Indigenous studies in “Understanding Tribal Sovereignty: Definitions, Conceptualizations, and Interpretations” to conclude that “theoretical conceptualizations of sovereignty—cultural, intellectual, hermeneutical, and rhetorical—demonstrate the power the term sovereignty has to transform oppressive practices and revitalize cultures” and advises against “[c]onflating the exercise of sovereignty with the process of decolonization” (a second major theoretical project in Indigenous studies).

While a number of authors are concerned with reflecting on academic concepts that have acquired (or already come with) the power of dominant legal authority, others show us how they are felt and lived, as well as promoted and exercised, in actual Indigenous communities. Jessica Cattelino’s discussion of gaming in “Tribal Gaming and Indigenous Sovereignty, with Notes from Seminole County” and Pauline Turner Strong’s analysis of forced child removal in “What is an Indian Family?” enhance our understanding of how sovereignty and peoplehood are experienced, asserted, and applied and the ways in which these realities and their assertions confound and transform non-Indigenous understandings and assumptions.

The agony of coerced child removal represents just one of many points of contact between Indigenous Peoples and what in *Wind from an Enemy Sky* D’Arcy McNickle termed “this country of government buildings and government kind of people.”²⁸ George Pierre Castile in “Therapeutic Experience of Maximum Feasible Participation” and Larry Nesper in “Tribal Wisconsin’s Indigenous Judicial Systems and the Emergence of Tribal States” both emphasize

the extent to which notions of sovereignty did not emerge solely from theoretical arguments unfolding among scholars but gained momentum as the unintended consequences of Indigenous Peoples relationships with the apparatuses of colonizing nation-states.

In addition to shaping an Indigenous critical theory, which, as Joanne Barker, Cobb, and Steve Russell suggest, is concerned with politics and self-governance, the sovereignty project also informs intellectual work that critically assesses the racial essentializing of Indigenous Peoples as one race. Such a framework represents human beings crudely—and safely (because its common sensical countenance does not require reflection on the complicated meanings of difference)—as special interest groups and ethnic minorities. As evidenced by persisting intellectual and organizational threats aimed at Indigenous studies by local administrations at numerous institutions, the problem of racializing Indigenous Peoples hits home in academic Indigenous studies. To intellectually or administratively subsume Indigenous studies under ethnic or American studies programs, anthropology departments, or other units or programs hinders rather than nourishes and develops Indigenous interdisciplines, and are used to maintain—not challenge and transform—established methodologies, rules of evidence, and theories that still carry with them the residue of historical colonization and ongoing attempts to assimilate, absorb, and integrate Indigenous Peoples into the social and cultural mainstream. In the words of Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa citizen Duane Champagne, “the easy, or apparently natural, placement of Native studies into ethnic studies, or other interdisciplinary arrangements, submerges the study of indigenous peoples into mainstream academic orientations and understandings.”²⁹

Trapping Indigenous Peoples inside the “Indian sign” and, using the language of savagery to racialize Indigenous interdisciplines as mythology or superstition—or simply as another version of ethnic studies—does not have to be the case, as several contributors to this special issue suggest. In their respective contributions, Barker and Edward Valandra share Champagne’s concern with the administratively enforced problem of limiting opportunities for Indigenous interdisciplines to inform both academic Indigenous studies, in particular, and the academy more generally.³⁰

Although it implicitly informs many of the contributions to this special issue, the problem of raced frameworks is addressed unambiguously in “National Coexistence is our Bull Durham: Revisiting ‘The Indian Today’” by Sincangu Lakota Edward Valandra, who racializes ambivalence (what he terms “white ambivalence”) in order to elucidate a decolonial politics concerned with expressions of Indigenous autonomy and self-determination that, he contends, contributors to “The Indian Today” openly resisted or failed to comprehend (precisely because of the common sense that “Indian” signifies a separate *race* of people). Neither a mere inconvenience nor simply an intellectual puzzle, the problem also is addressed explicitly by Barker and Russell, both of whom re-

flect upon indigeneity as it has been contaminated by racializing frames—by what White Earth Band of Chippewa citizen Gerald Vizenor has characterized as “the reservation politics of sanguine modulation and blood count names,” which he sees as “a curse of exclusion and dominance.”³¹ Responding in “Recognition” to threats posed by anti-Indigenous sovereignty organizations, Lenape citizen Barker unequivocally calls on tribal policy makers (whom she suggests overwhelmingly are not listening to Indigenous academics and scholars) to “deracialize their concepts of membership, belonging, and relatedness,” and, once deracialized (or decolonized and indigenized) “reimagine the possibilities for Native governance and social relationships.” Similarly, in “The Racial Paradox of Tribal Citizenship,” citizen of the Cherokee Nation Russell theorizes race as a “European disease” that infects tribal governance and social relations to make a case for de-racializing (or decolonizing) citizenship criteria and informing it instead with the restorative power of peoples politics—with the healing warmth of indigeneity.

American studies, too, having long elided the interdisciplines of Original Peoples, must engage in serious conversation about moving beyond frames that limit Indigenous Peoples to functioning as exotic flavors that at best enhance and at worst corrupt rather than radically transform established academic ways of knowing. Beginning with the outrageous depiction of Indigenous Peoples in the *Declaration of Independence*, languages of racism (and savagery, noble or otherwise) misrepresent Indigenous Peoples as a particular brand of *racial* minority, rather than as hundreds of distinct *political* and cultural communities, and push them (us) and their (our) ways of knowing into cultural, economic, legal, social, territorial, and intellectual frontiers, outside of but connected with life in and surrounded by the apparatus of the United States and the culture widely signified as “American.” What this suggests, as Nicholas Thomas has shown in another context, is that colonialism itself deserves ongoing reinterpretation. It merits our collective attention because it is much more insidious than simply a harmonizing ideology that nourishes and rationalizes military conquest, land transfer, child abduction, coerced removal, and economic exploitation. Rather, colonialism deserves our attention because it is a *complex cultural process* “expressed in a plethora of crude and more subtle acts” and “a wider range of events and representations, including some in which the critics themselves are implicated.”³²

For the most part this has *not* been the case for intellectual work that counts as American studies before *and after* 1965. Cultures of American studies, unwittingly or not, have participated in crude and more subtle acts that have excluded Indigenous Peoples on their/our terms. In the words of Carter Meland and his University of Minnesota American studies collaborators, “American Indian contributions to the study of American cultural life have been eclipsed.” In their contribution to this special issue entitled “The Bases are Loaded: American Indians and American Studies,” Meland, Joseph Bauerkemper, LeAnne

Howe, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark offer a healing warmth to American studies that is transformative. Relying on a baseball metaphor, suggesting that “the bases are loaded with a variety of subjects,” Meland and his colleagues argue that “there is no American studies without American Indians.” When reading through the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, from intellectual positions grounded in the authority of the interdisciplines of Original Peoples, the term “Indian tribes” takes on a regenerative rather than debilitating power. Thus, rather than once again relegating Indigenous Peoples and interdisciplines to the past or borderline or margins (or, worse, the abject) of academic American studies, law, history, culture, and daily life, Meland, Bauerkemper, Howe, and Stark argue that “American Indian cultural patterns are intrinsic to the practice of American studies as a central and original—if too often overlooked—way of understanding in America.” They offer a sweeping revision of what informs American studies, with Indigenous Peoples and interdisciplines as principal, substantial, and transformative contributors.

In the article that concludes “Indigeneity at the Crossroads of American Studies,” Daniel R. Wildcat, a Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, suitably marks this joint issue of *American Studies* and *Indigenous Studies Today* with the passing of Vine Deloria, Jr., without question the leading and, broadly, most influential Indigenous voice in the United States since 1965. As Shawnee/Lenape legal scholar Steve Newcomb has written, Deloria “led the way for a generation of American Indians who wanted to successfully challenge the hegemonic grip that the dominant society of the United States had over their lives, while calling into question many erroneous assumptions about Native existence.”³³ Over the course of his thirty-five-plus-year writing career, Deloria published more than twenty books, starting in 1969 (a year after Everett Edwards Press released *The American Indian Today*) with his best-selling *Custer Died for Your Sins*. He also wrote more than 200 articles and essays and delivered numerous keynotes, lectures, congressional testimony, and interviews—representing work that contributed enormously to established academic fields ranging from anthropology, education, law, literary criticism, the natural and social sciences, paleontology, philosophy, political science, and religion and theology. His contributions and challenges to these many fields reflect a transformational shift in intellectual authority solely from traditions traceable to Europe to include ways of making sense of the world that pre-date the European presence in “America.” For these reasons alone, having Wildcat’s article conclude this special issue is fitting.

However, Deloria was much more than a prolific writer and captivating critic.³⁴ For certain, he engaged with established academic disciplines from an intellectual authority grounded in Indigenous interdisciplines—from the standpoint of indigeneity—and located in what actually unfolded for forty years in Indian Country. But, further, he influenced entire Indigenous communities, nu-

merous Indigenous scholars, and countless other individuals from all walks of life.³⁵ “In Indian country,” according to Ihanktonwan Band of the Oceti Sakowin and Ihanktonwan Community College Dakota/Nakota language teacher Faith Spotted Eagle, “the name Vine Deloria Jr. is a household word. His quotes are on walls and often roll off the tongues of young Natives doing reports and speeches. Most importantly, he writes what we all would like to say.”³⁶ Thus, as suggested by the title of his second book, *We Talk, You Listen*, several contributors to “Indigeneity at the Crossroads of American Studies” ask American studies to listen to—and, more important, hear—what Indigenous Peoples say. After all, as Meland and his University of Minnesota colleagues profoundly suggest, and as Deloria advised in his second book, there are no American studies without Indigenous Peoples and their/our interdisciplines.

Notes

1. D’Arcy McNickle, *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (1978; reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 106. A year after his birth in 1904, McNickle was enrolled and allotted on the Flathead Reservation, homeland of the Confederated Bitterroot Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai tribes. As a boy, he attended the mission school in St. Ignatius, Montana and the U.S. government boarding school at Chemawa, Oregon from 1913 to 1916. In *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (106-110), Antoine Brown, the returned student who rides from his uncle’s camp toward the agency town, recalls the viciousness of school administrators and the atmosphere of fear that permeated student life. McNickle’s biographer speculates that his “account of Antoine’s experience suggests that such incidents had left their imprint on his memory,” even late in life. See Dorothy R. Parker, *Singing an Indian Song: A Biography of D’Arcy McNickle* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 20-21. For a wide-ranging account of the government program for “Indian” education, including the day-to-day experiences of Indian children, see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

2. For this special issue of *American Studies* and *Indigenous Studies Today*, we debated the question of whether to write designations such as Indigenous and Native with capital letters or not, as well as how and when to use the terms throughout the issue. We decided to leave the matter up to individual authors, reflecting the diversity of approaches in their respective fields.

3. As noted by Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Cornstassel, the academic genealogy of the concept signified by the term “peoplehood” starts with Edward H. Spicer in 1962 and moves from *Cycles of Conquest* through the work of Robert K. Thomas into American Indian and Indigenous studies. See Alfred and Cornstassel, “Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism,” *Government and Opposition* 40 (Fall 2005), 597-614. To understand more fully how Indigenous scholars have contributed to the conversation started earlier by the anthropologist Spicer, in addition to Alfred and Cornstassel cited above, see Robert K. Thomas, “The Tap-Roots of Peoplehood,” in *Getting to the Heart of the Matter: Collected Letters and Papers*, ed. by Daphne J. Anderson (Vancouver: Native Ministries Consortium, Vancouver School of Theology, 1990), 25-32; Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (1984; reprint, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 7-12; and Tom Holm, J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis, “Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 18 (Spring 2003), 7-24, especially 11-15. For articulations of indigeneity (and its striking similarities to “peoplehood”), see LaDonna Harris and Jacqueline Wasilewski, “Indigeneity, an Alternative Worldview: Four R’s (Relationship, Responsibility, Reciprocity, Redistribution) vs. Two P’s (Power and Profit),” *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 21 (September/October 2004), 489-503; and Roger Maaka and Augie Fleras, *The Politics of Indigeneity: Challenging the State in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand* (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 2005), especially 53-56.

4. Although they are connected in colonial legal discourse and in matters that constitute “Indian” identities, we distinguish “Original Peoples,” whose histories start at the beginning of creation, from “Indians,” whose histories begin with the European invasion of the Americas. Original Peoples (as opposed to “Indians” or “aboriginals”) name themselves, in their (our) own languages, by terms that sometimes translate into English as “The People” or as “The Human Beings,” that sometimes translate into English as entities associated with and connected to spe-

cific places, or in languages that resist easy translation into English. When using the two words "Original People," we are thinking of human beings who are claimed by one or more of thousands of distinct families, groups, kinship communities, clans, tribes, bands, councils, reservations, colonies, towns, villages, rancherías, pueblos, confederacies, and nations. For more on names and naming, and the matter of theorizing the connections among signifiers and signifieds, see Michael Yellow Bird, "What We Want to Be Called: Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Identity Labels," *American Indian Quarterly* 23 (Spring 1999), 1-21; Jeff J. Cortassel, "Who is Indigenous? 'Peoplehood' and Ethnonationalist Approaches to Rearticulating Indigenous Identity," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9 (March 2003), 75-100; and Cornel Pewewardy, "Renaming Ourselves and On Our Own Terms: Race, Tribal Nations, and Representation in Education," *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* 1 (Spring 2000), 11-28.

5. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, "In their foundations, Western disciplines are as much implicated in each other as they are in imperialism." See Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Zed Books, 1999), 11.

6. Citizen of the Seminole Nation Susan A. Miller argues that Indigenous Peoples "have sophisticated intellectual disciplines, many of them no doubt thousands of years old[that] are integral to cultures that have survived on this continent for thousands of years longer than any of the European colonies have even existed." Quoted from her August 2003 contribution to the H-AmIndian thread entitled "On the Unexplored in American Indian Studies." For recent works that represent Indigenous knowledge as intellectual interdisciplines, rather than as superstition and "beliefs," see Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*; and Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, eds., *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004). See also Susan A. Miller, "Seminoles and Africans under Seminole Law: Sources and Discourses of Tribal Sovereignty and 'Black Indian' Entitlement," *Wicazo Sa Review* 20 (Spring 2005), 23-47, for an example of what is at stake for Indigenous Peoples living with the daily realities of contemporary colonialism whose identities, ceremonies, and histories are grounded in distinctive Indigenous laws and languages.

7. For both evidence and examples of this point, see the contents of both *American Indian Quarterly*, edited by Devon Abbott Mihesuah from 1998-2007, and *Wicazo Sa Review*, edited from 1985-2004 by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and, since 2004, by James Riding in.

8. Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, *Remember This! Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 14. For an example of this point, in addition to *Remember This!* see Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird, eds., *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2005).

9. Wilson, *Remember This!* 1.

10. Stuart Levine and Nancy O. Lurie, eds., "The Indian Today," special issue of *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 6 (Fall 1965).

11. In U.S. law, Indian Country is all land within the boundaries of any Indian reservation, all dependent Indian communities within U.S. borders, and all Indian allotments. See *Indian Country Defined*, 1949, U.S. Code, 18 USC § 1151. Indian Country also might be understood as any place Indians and Original Peoples live. It even might reasonably be conceived as all of the territory widely designated today as the nation-states constituting North America. Unfortunately, in popular culture, "Indian Country" also represents treacherous territory, usually locations behind so-called "enemy" lines (when "enemy" is conceived of as Other). On February 19, 1991, just to cite one of many possible examples, Marine Corps Brigadier General Richard Neal, briefing reporters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, referred to Iraqi-held territory in Kuwait as "Indian Country" when reporting the rescue of a downed F-16 pilot. Quoted in Michael Yellow Bird, "Cowboys and Indians: Toys of Genocide, Icons of American Colonialism," *Wicazo Sa Review* 19 (Fall 2004), 44; and Paul DeMain, "Troops on Their Way Home," *News from Indian Country*, March 15, 1991, 1.

12. This assertion obscures the extent to which social scientists, especially sociologists and anthropologists, were represented in the American studies movement during the 1950s and early 1960s. For an examination of the role of social scientists in the contents of *American Quarterly* during this period, see Kathryn E. Kuhn and Wynne Walker Moskop, "Free Riders or Front Runners? The Role of Social Scientists in the American Studies Movement," *American Studies* 40 (Summer 1999): 115-136.

13. Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" *American Quarterly* 9 (Summer 1957), 197.

14. Settler representations of Indigenous Peoples that constituted common sense understanding have changed over time. From nineteenth-century perceptions of Indigenous Peoples as helpless children and pathetic state wards, twentieth-century Indigenous Peoples were increasingly accepted as disadvantaged minorities entitled to compensation because of government-sponsored injustice, as well as rights-bearing and equality-seeking citizens with some level of

self-determining autonomy. As we move forward into the twenty-first century, Indigenous Peoples increasingly are heard and understood as knowing themselves (ourselves) in *political* terms as peoples or nations—as political communities, rather than within the Western frameworks of race or ethnicity—with rights to develop Indigenous models of self-determination, regardless of formal recognition by colonial (or colonizing) states.

15. The phrase “American Indians and American life” is an appropriation of the title of a May 1957 special issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, edited by George E. Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, which reflects the attention that issues concerning Indigenous Peoples were receiving from social scientists and from Indigenous scholars themselves. The sole possible exception to this generalization was a single research note, “English Works of Seventeenth-Century Indians,” by Walter T. Meserve in the Fall 1956 issue of the *American Quarterly*, the primary emphasis of which was on English-language literary production, not on the Indian authors or Indian cultures.

16. Although his doctorate was in sociology and anthropology, Murray Wax was a qualitative sociologist whose conceptual approach was virtually indistinguishable from that of his wife and co-author, Rosalie Hankey Wax.

17. Scholar, social scientist, teacher, elder, “Uncle,” activist, and editor of the monthly newsletter *Indian Voices*, Thomas (1925-1991)—also known as “Howdy Folks”—received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Arizona, where he studied with Edward Spicer, and worked on a PhD in action anthropology with Sol Tax at the University of Chicago, before accepting appointments at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1957); the Institute of Indian Studies at the University of South Dakota (1958); Montiel College; Wayne State University in Detroit (1959-1981); and the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Arizona (1981-1991). For sympathetic examples of Thomas’ intellectual and personal influence, see Steve Pavlik, ed., *A Good Cherokee, A Good Anthropologist: Papers in Honor of Robert K. Thomas* (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 1998).

Poet, educator, and co-author of three books, Witt (1934-) received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Michigan and her PhD in biological anthropology from the University of New Mexico. In addition to teaching at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1970-1972), and Colorado College (1972-1974), she served as director of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 1975-1983 and as Cabinet Secretary for Natural Resources under New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya from 1983-1985. In 1985, she became a member of the U.S. diplomatic corps, serving in South America and Africa. At the time of this publication, she is a board member for the National Indian Youth Council and lives in New Mexico.

18. See Alfonso Ortiz, “D’Arcy McNickle (1904-1977): Across the River and Up the Hill,” *American Indian Journal* 4 (April 1978), 12-16.

19. D’Arcy McNickle, “The Indian Tests the Mainstream,” *The Nation* 26 September 1966, 275.

20. Stuart Levine and Nancy O. Lurie, eds., *The American Indian Today* (Deland, FL: Everett Edwards Press, 1968). In 1970 a paperback edition was published by Penguin. See Levine and Lurie, eds., *The American Indian Today* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970).

21. George Spindler, review of *The American Indian Today*, in *American Anthropologist* 71 (April 1969), 341.

22. Gwendolyn Brooks, *In the Mecca: Poems* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); E. Earl Baughman and W. Grant Dalhstrom, *Negro and White Children: A Psychological Study in the Rural South* (New York: Academic Press, 1968); and Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). The roster of recipients of and books recognized by the Anisfield-Wolf Award, which was instituted in 1936, includes some of the most prominent scholars and classic works dealing with race and ethnicity in the twentieth century. For a description of the Award and a list of the awardees since its inception, see www.anisfield-wolf.org.

23. Stuart W. Little, “SR’s 1969 Anisfield-Wolf Awards,” *Saturday Review*, May 29, 1969, 23.

24. “The Indian Today,” and the other “overview texts” Allen considers in “Unspeakable the Settler” intervened in the emergence of a global movement of Indigenous Peoples that, in the words of Ronald Niezen, “developed principally within Western traditions and scholarship and legal reform” to revive traditional identities and be put to use as “a tool of liberation.” See Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 221. Maori woman-of-color writer Makere Stewart-Harawira sees the Indigenous movement as “a new political ontology of global order” that has responded and is responding to “the development of the world order of nation states and its transformation into a global order,” ending with the recent emergence (since 2002) of “American unilateralism.” See Makere Stewart-Harawira, *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization* (New York: Zed Books, 2005), 1-2.

25. For Canada and Canadians, see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992); and R. Scott Sheffield,

The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

26. As Deloria has shown, these expectations are particularly apparent, even startling and bewildering, when "Indians" show up in unanticipated situations, locations, and settings. See Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004). For an example of what is at stake for Indigenous Peoples reconstituted in colonialism's culture as "Indians" but in reality—in daily life—dealing with the U.S. legal apparatus, see Robert A. Williams, Jr., *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). For a discussion of the problem the Indian sign poses for actual Indigenous Peoples who labor to speak through the media and legal apparatuses of Western democracies, see D. Anthony Tyeeme Clark, "Wa a o, wa ba ski na me ska ta!: 'Indian' Mascots, and the Pathology of Anti-Indigenous Racism," in *In the Game: Race, Identity and Sports in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Amy Bass, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 137-166.

27. See, for instance, Taiiaki Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005); and Joanne Barker, ed., *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

28. McNickle, *Wind from an Enemy Sky*, 106.

29. Duane Champagne, "From Sovereignty to Minority: As American As Apple Pie," *Wicazo Sa Review* 20 (Fall 2005), 21.

30. See, for instance, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekeya's Earth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), as well as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and Craig Howe, "The Dialectics of Ethnicity in America: A View from American Indian Studies," in *Color-Line to Borderlands: The Matrix of American Ethnic Studies*, ed. Johnella E. Butler (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 150-168. See also Winona Stevenson, "'Ethnic' Assimilates 'Indigenous': A Study in Intellectual Neocolonialism," *Wicazo Sa Review* 13 (Spring 1998), 33-51.

31. Gerald Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 88. Why blood? See Melissa L. Meyer, *Thicker than Water: The Origins of Blood as Symbol and Ritual* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

32. Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 1-2.

33. After experiencing declining health for several months, Deloria passed on November 13, 2005. Steve Newcomb, "A Scholar's Influence in Indian Country," *Indian Country Today*, January 12, 2005, A6.

34. Deloria was a writer and critic, in addition to being a father and husband, son, teacher, mentor, and uncle. Prior to the release of his first book, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, Deloria served as executive director of the National Congress of American Indians from 1964-1967. He later established the Institute for the Development of Indian Law and was a founding trustee of the National Museum of the American Indian. Born in Martin, a small South Dakota town located on the border separating the state and the Pine Ridge Reservation, Deloria served in the Marine Corps, graduated from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and the University of Colorado (CU) School of Law, and taught at the University of Arizona and CU-Boulder for more than thirty years. He was a fourth-generation descendant of the Yanktonai medicine keeper Saswe. His father, Vine Sr., and grandfather, Philip (co-founder of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity in 1893 and founding member of the Society of American Indians in 1911), both were prominent Episcopal priests. For more on the Deloria family, generally, and Saswe and Philip Sr., in particular, see Vine Deloria, Jr., *Singing for a Spirit: A Portrait of the Dakota Sioux* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 2000).

35. For the breadth and depth of Deloria's intellectual influence, see Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker, and David E. Wilkins, eds., *Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004). See also the January 12, 2005 issue of *Indian Country Today* and Steve Pavlik and Daniel R. Wildcat, eds., *Destroying Dogma: Vine Deloria, Jr. and His Influence on American Society* (forthcoming, Fulcrum Publishing).

36. Faith Spotted Eagle, "Deski (Uncle) Vine," *Indian Country Today*, January 12, 2005, A4.