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VANISHING THE INDIAN: ASSIMILATION, EDUCATION, AND THE PROGRAM TO ELIMINATE AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

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Major professor

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VANISHING THE INDIAN: ASSIMILATION, EDUCATION, AND THE PROGRAM TO ELIMINATE AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

By

Christopher David Geherin

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

VANISHING THE INDIAN: ASSIMILATION, EDUCATION, AND THE PROGRAM TO ELIMINATE AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

By

Christopher David Geherin

After the Civil War, the United States realigned its relationship with American Indians toward the objective of complete assimilation. To this end, education served as the primary means, and the imposition of the English language represented the linchpin. That Indians learn English was not the sole concern, however, for an encompassing ban of Indian languages became central to Indian education.

Beginning with an analysis of the historical literature relating to the development of assimilation through Indian education, this study then explores the specifics of the government's language policies. Examinations of linguistics, the influence of Indian languages, ethnographic evidence, education theory, and white and Indian responses further reveal the intent and impact of the policies.

Presented in the name of benevolence, assimilation through education embodied a significantly oppressive intent: the language component of the government's Indian education program was ultimately designed to obliterate Indian cultures and thereby effectively "vanish the Indian."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be impossible to thank individually all the people whose support and understanding enabled the completion of this project. To all who helped, I offer my deepest gratitude. I especially wish to extend an expression of profound appreciation to Dr. David Bailey, under whose perceptive and encouraging guidance this examination was undertaken, developed, and realized. I would also like to thank Dr. Peter Vinten-Johansen and Dr. Harry Reed; their advice and insight added to whatever strengths this work possesses. Finally, I am grateful to Mary Reid and Nancy Ashley of the History Department at Michigan State University for their invaluable assistance in navigating the myriad channels of this process.

Do we ask the white man, "Do as the Indian does"? No, we do not. Why then do you ask us, "Do as the white man does"?

-an anonymous Kwakiutl to Franz Boas

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the generation after the Civil War, the United States found itself confronted with a novel twist on the old "Indian Problem." It had long been assumed that the nation's Indian population would eventually succumb to the inexorable tide of white civilization; however, as armed resistance diminished and blunt military solutions became untenable, it was more and more apparent that the Indians would not simply vanish in the face of ever-encroaching whites. Therefore the situation required the formulation of a new approach to Indian Affairs in order to deal with the substantial, mostly subdued and, as was increasingly acknowledged, enduring Indian population. Not only did this approach have to consider the fact that Indian cultures represented profound alternatives to white American culture, but also that Indian cultures themselves were significantly distinct from each other.[1]

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[1]Throughout this examination, the terms "Indian" and "white" are employed. Not only are such monolithic labels inaccurate, but, as Calvin Martin remarked in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, sweeping identifications such as "Indian" often "straitjacket . . . diversity for the

White Americans approached this diversity not from a perspective of tolerance and cultural relativism, but from a standpoint of ethnocentrism and racism. Deemed inferior, all Indian cultures were to be replaced by white civilization. Thus the solution proposed to the late nineteenth century's chapter of the Indian problem centered upon a program of alleged assimilation, of which Indian education represented the primary tool. Within this concerted program of what rapidly became compulsory education, imposition of the English language constituted the linchpin. That Indians learn the language of white Americans was not the sole concern, however, for stringent prohibitions of Indian languages attended all efforts of Indian instruction. Ultimately, the language component of assimilation demonstrated a bifurcated approach of singular intent. Through eradication of Indian languages

sake of convenience," 3. In an examination of this scope and kind, generalizations are inevitable. Beyond mere convenience, however, these generalizations serve a valuable purpose: since whites and Indians often perceived each other as a collective, it is important to explore Indian-white relations accordingly. Whenever possible and informative, however, more specific labels are utilized. Yet even narrower categorizations such as "Protestant" or "Sioux" straitjacket the diversity within those groups. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that many of the more specific terms acknowledging Indian diversity are as inaccurate as the broad label that resulted from Columbus's erroneous geography. For example, "Navajo" derives from a Spanish designation, and "Sioux" evolved from a disparaging label applied by the Ojibwa people. (The Navajo refer to themselves as the Diné, and the Sioux consider themselves Lakota, Dakota, or Nakota.) Precisely because ignorance and prejudice have so frequently characterized the history of relations between differing peoples, the telling of that history involves little recourse to terms that transcend such human failings.

and the concomitant substitution of the English language, reformers hoped to work toward the complete elimination of Indian cultures. Although persistently cloaked in expressions of the noblest motives, the "assimilation" sought by the means of language imposition and prohibition therefore represented the adaptation of an abiding assumption of United States Indian policy: the "Indian" would still vanish, now culturally rather than physically, and now at the hands of ostensibly benevolent educators.

Simply recounting the development of Indian language policies does not adequately explore all that those policies represented, for the attempts at language imposition and prohibition were symptoms of a complex confrontation between profoundly distinct cultures. Examining the language policies does afford invaluable insight into the nature of late nineteenth century Indian-white relations. As quintessential expressions of assimilationism, the policies disclose much regarding the mind-set and objectives of white reformers.[2]

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[2]More than simply the realm of government policy makers, assimilation was a broad American impulse. It reflected the interests of multifarious white groups, crossing political, religious, and regional boundaries. In fact, most white Americans with any concern for Indian issues agreed that Indians must relinquish their ways and adopt those of white civilization. Thus the term "reformer" extends broadly. There were those white Americans who opposed assimilation in favor of tolerating degrees of cultural diversity and Indian self-determination. Yet proponents of such policies were only a small and radical element. They were, in essence, Indian policy revolutionaries, not reformers. Assimilation represented not an extreme transformation of Indian policy, but a refinement. The ultimate objectives of earlier Indian policy--oppression and subjugation--maintained within the program of

Similarly, because the language policies represented the culmination of assimilationist education, Indian responses to the policies illustrate Indian interests and perspectives in the starkest terms of cultural confrontation with whites. Yet the nature of the confrontation is far too complicated to be explained by a strict policy study. First of all, the language policies emerged from a maelstrom of often conflicting white interests. Diverse intellectual, religious, political, economic, and social concerns were distilled into a single program: assimilation. Thus, to understand assimilation--and the objectives it was designed to realize--the processes and different interests from which it evolved must be examined. Likewise, Indian responses to the language policies reflected interests and objectives that cannot be separated from the cultural and historical contexts that shaped them. Therefore, ethnohistorical evidence illuminating Indian perspectives is essential. Furthermore, the implications of the language policies cannot be examined effectively without access to disciplines outside the traditional realm of history. In particular, discussions of linguistic theory and the neglected influences of Indian languages upon English shed a revealing and ignominious light upon reform efforts intended to substitute English for Indian languages.

Therefore this study embraces a multi-disciplinary approach. Diverse sources such as historical literature,

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assimilation.

etymological evidence, education theory, Indian autobiographies, ethnological investigations, and document collections were mined in an effort to more fully understand the Indian language policies of the assimilationist era. Such sources offer evidence that demonstrates that the goal of the language policies was not assimilation or even education, but oppression of Indians through elimination of Indian cultures. Ultimately, it is essential that this examination defy simple categorizations; in exploring the collision between cultures that the language program represented, a one-dimensional analysis would stand as an act of negligence.

II. "IRON FINGERS IN A VELVET GLOVE": THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNITED STATES INDIAN POLICY AFTER 1865

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, significant policy developments reoriented the relationship of the United States with American Indians toward the prime directive of assimilation. To understand these developments, one must first examine the preceding period--from the end of the Civil War to the 1880s--for the changes of this era enabled and shaped the late nineteenth century's assimilationist fervor and accomplishments.[1] In *The Great Father*, an encompassing examination of United States Indian policy, Francis Paul Prucha argued that "the ideas espoused in the 1860s and 1870s became the platform for a concentrated and successful drive in the next two decades that transformed the relations between the United States Government and the Indians."[2] That

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[1]For a more thorough discussion of the history of Indian policy developments, see especially Loring Benson Priest, *Uncle Sam's Stepchildren: The Reformation of United States Indian Policy,1865-1867,* and Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians,* volumes I and II.

[2]Prucha, *Great Father,* 593.

"concentrated and successful drive" would be the unmitigated attack on all things Indian that was articulated in such high-profile legislation as the Dawes Act and, more importantly, in the compulsory education program that centered upon the substitution of English for Indian languages.

With the close of the Civil War and the changes in American society that a Union victory in that conflict brought, Americans with a predilection for social reform could unite and turn their concerns and energies more fully to what was euphemistically referred to as "the Indian Problem." Characterized by internecine and sporadic armed conflicts; by diplomatic and civilian relationships deceitful, treacherous, and ignorant in nature; and by a United States Indian policy apparatus that increasingly came to be known for its corruption and incompetence, the nation had much more than a mere "problem" to confront. The ugly face of a mammoth, perplexing, and often tragic crisis stared back into the eyes of any American who cared to peer with even a cursory glance into the soul of the country.

Despite the loss and the energy that the nation's War Between the States had bled from its people, the government promptly turned its attention to the troublesome realm of Indian policy. Perhaps it was as Prucha asserted, that the abolition of human bondage and the symbolic end to sectional conflict that Appomattox delivered created in Americans a fresh and strong sense of both higher morality and national

unity. Rather than wallowing in exhaustion, the government displayed an invigorated impatience to confront the Indian issue on new terms and, led by President Ulysses S. Grant, embarked upon the gloriously titled Peace Policy. Essentially no more than a professed commitment to adhere to values of sincerity and justice in dealing with the Indians, the Peace Policy possesses a legacy which should not be underestimated. "In the decade and a half from 1865 to 1880 the principles of peace and civilization were refined and reformulated into a consistent and generally agreed upon program that in the following two decades would be enacted into law."[3] The Peace Policy became the heart of late nineteenth century Indian policy.

The apparatus of this nebulous governmental policy demands attention, as its mind-set and constituency also laid the foundation for the process of ensuing reform. Behind the lofty principles that defined the Peace Policy's intent were agents empowered to act upon those principles: the appropriately and equally idealistically titled Peace Commission. The Commission, created by Congress on June 20, 1867, was at least in part a reaction to the scathing indictment of United States Indian policy issued by the Doolittle Committee, an investigative group whose diligence revealed the government's

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[3]Ibid., 483.

impatience in pursuing Indian policy reform.[4] Employing both civilian and military leaders, the Peace Commission's mandate was to meet with Indian leaders, examine the causes of hostility, and seek peaceful resolutions to conflicts. At the same time, the Commission selected reservation sites and encouraged Indian adoption of white culture. Guided by ideals of benevolence and justice, the Commission's perspective was nevertheless one of unflinching paternalism, a paternalism determined to impose pacification and civilization upon American Indians according to white standards.

An ironic parallel to this newfound benevolence was the continuing hostility between Indians and whites in the American West, where sporadic and separate conflicts earned the inclusive title of Indian Wars. Whites, aided by the completion of the first transcontinental railway in 1869 and lured by the prospect of land and gold, increasingly encroached upon Indian land and threatened traditional Indian ways of life. With the American frontier effectively closed or closing and no more "open" territory onto which Indians could be pushed ahead of white settlement, the resulting friction between Indian and white cultures culminated in a series of intense and often vicious wars.

On the surface, such violence would seem to present an

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[4]Demonstrating the government's celerity in addressing the problems of Indian policy is the fact that the Doolittle Committee was chartered on March 3, 1865--more than one month before the close of the Civil War.

embarrassment to, if not a direct rejection of, both the policies of the Peace Commission and the reformers who espoused them. However, the Indian Wars and the Peace Policy must be seen as products of the same context and as exhibiting the same intent; with white settlers and their interests advancing upon Indians, the United States was forced to confront an issue that could no longer be postponed. On the one hand, violence in the West further convinced Americans that a policy of peace was desperately needed. Tragic massacres such as that of the peaceful Cheyenne at Sand Creek and wars such as that for the Black Hills demanded the reformation of the government's approach to Indian Affairs. Yet the relationship between the Indian Wars and the Peace Policy was much more direct; the approach formulated in the 1870s was one of a well-intentioned paternalism backed by the omnipresent threat of military action. Even the Peace Commission was authorized to employ force to suppress Indian hostilities.[5]

Through the Indian Wars and the Peace Commission, the United States worked toward the same end: the pacification and eventual assimilation of the Indians. Predicated on the assumption that whites knew what was in the best interest of Indians, both undertakings were fully intended to impose

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[5]It is important to recognize that any Indian resistance to the attempted imposition of white interests was seen as Indian hostility--and therefore subject to United States military action.

white-defined policies. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ely Parker declared that Indians

> should be secured their legal rights; located, when practicable, upon reservations; assisted in agricultural pursuits and the arts of civilized life; and that the Indians who should fail or refuse to come in and locate in permanent abodes provided for them, would be subject wholly to the control and supervision of military authorities, to be treated as friendly or hostile as circumstances might justify.[6]

Peacefully or violently, all Indians were to accept white policy.

This interrelationship between the Indian wars and the Peace Policy demonstrated what would endure as a critical component of Indian affairs over the next few decades: the coalescence of military and civilian concerns in attempting to bring about the cultural extermination of the Indians. Such an approach demanded--backed by the threat of force--that Indians accept the assimilation efforts represented in such measures as education. As far as Commissioner Parker was concerned, a better method of addressing Indian affairs did not exist. "The result has been harmony of action between [the Departments of War and the Interior], no conflict of opinion having arisen as to the duty, power and responsibility

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[6]*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (hereafter as *ARCIA*), 1869, in *Congressional Serial Set*, Series 1414, 447-48.

of either."[7] One reformer aptly captured the nature of this coalescence, deeming United States Indian policy "iron fingers in a velvet glove."[8]

Three less dramatic but equally critical developments in Indian Policy also attended the period marked by the Indian wars and the Peace Commission: the ineffective efforts of the Board of Commissioners, the abortive attempt at church-appointed Indian agencies, and the defeat of the attempt to transfer the control of Indian policy to the War Department. The failure of each of these endeavors profoundly affected Indian policy reform to follow.

The Board of Indian Commissioners, created in 1869 to foster cooperation between the public and the government relating to Indian policy issues, was effectively fated to failure from its inception. Condemned to inefficacy by a vague mandate that relegated it to a position subordinate to the Interior Department and devoid of any true power, the Board's attempts to carry out its duties in earnest drew neglect at best and, at worst, outright antagonism. Both a partisan and sectionally-divided Congress and an authority-protecting Interior Department created constant obstacles for the Board. Plagued also by difficulties ranging from internal

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[7]Ibid.

[8]George Ward Nichols, "The Indian: What Should We Do With Him," in *Harper's Magazine,* April 1870, 739, as cited in Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and United States Indian Policy,* 376 n. 14.

squabbling, members' conflicts of interest, and the ignorance of its commissioners in matters of Indian policy, the Board's initial promise and enthusiasm faded into a tale of lost potential and minor contributions.[9]

The impact of the Board upon later Indian policy reform was, however, not insignificant. In particular, the experience of the Board of Indian Commissioners demonstrated that private individuals involved directly with government in setting Indian policy represented a less than effective arrangement. Yet the failure of the Board did not send private citizens concerned with Indian affairs scurrying into corners of disillusion and frustration. Instead, non-government reformers realized that their power could best be exercised from a more independent position--cooperating with the government but not subordinate to it. In fact, the Board was "the first example of highly motivated men in a corporate, united attempt to change the course of government from outside the administrative structure. The idea would not die; it lived on in the reform sentiment that came to dominate in the 1880s and 1890s."[10] Indian policy reform required not a rejection of the kind of private involvement demonstrated by the Board, but a refinement.

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[9]Regarding members' conflicts of interest, the following example is especially illustrative: one Clinton B. Fisk, Secretary-Treasurer of the railroad running through the Indian Territory, was appointed chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1874.

[10]Prucha, *Great Father,* 522.

Furthermore, the ideological orientation of the Board's members set an important precedent for future reform. According to Prucha, "the establishment of this Board of Indian Commissioners . . . set post-Civil War Indian policy even more firmly in the pattern of American Evangelical Revivalism." This revivalism embodied what "became major themes of American Protestantism--lay leadership, a drive toward interdenominational cooperation, and emphasis, not on theological argument, but on ethical behavior, which supported an intense concern for social reform."[11] Precisely this perspective guided Indian policy through the most concerted efforts at assimilation through education.

The implications of the Board's existence are especially profound when considered in light of the character and composition of later groups such as the Lake Mohonk Conferences of Friends of the Indian. The Mohonk Conferences, the most influential of Indian policy reform organizations, were initiated by Albert K. Smiley--himself a Quaker member of the Board of Indian Commissioners--and were intended to offer a more deliberate alternative to the hurried, cursory meetings of the Board. Bringing together educational leaders, clergymen, prominent citizens, and a number of government officials at Smiley's New Paltz, New York resort, the Conferences substantially affected United States Indian policy from a cooperative but independent position outside the government.

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[11]Ibid., 503.

In fact, the Conferences' greatest strength may have been in the crucial link of influence forged between government reformers and philanthropists independent of the government. The relationship was a symbiotic one: the Conferences helped popularize government policies while the government formulated those policies at least in part through a reliance on advice and information contributed by the Mohonk reformers. The nature of this relationship characterized many reform efforts of this era, as prominent philanthropists and government officials formed a coalition of similar intent and activity; organizations such as the Mohonk Conferences offered highly visible support and encouragement of the government reform initiatives that marked the assimilationist era.[12]

Of a decidedly if not exclusively Protestant bent, the Mohonk reformers also exhibited qualities and beliefs that mirror the concept of Revivalism that Prucha saw as defining the Board of Indian Commissioners' orientation. Thus the ideals and the basic structure of the Board of Indian Commissioners survived to exert a powerful influence upon later United States Indian policy.

Similar to the failure of the Board as an attempt to place Indian policy reform in the hands of those outside the

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[12]There were notable exceptions to this scheme of public-government Indian policy accord: the determinedly pro-Indian Indian Rights Association and the National Indian Defense Association both resisted to some extent government intervention and argued that the tribes should be left to petition government involvement on their own terms.

government was the abortive effort to grant churches the authority to operate Indian agencies, an effort whose failure similarly solidified the character and structure of late nineteenth century Indian policy. Based on the assumption that church-assigned agencies would conduct themselves on a higher moral plane above the corruption and political patronage that plagued secularly-run agencies, the government divided Indian agencies among interested denominations in 1870.[13] As in the case of the Board of Commissioners, the church-assigned agencies found themselves troubled by a brand of difficulties peculiar to their nature. Interdenominational rivalries hobbled efforts; more glamorous foreign missionary work sapped badly needed funds. In the end, church-run Indian affairs proved no less susceptible to the pitfalls of white self-interest. The result of this experience was to push religious involvement into the role that would soon also occupy those non-government reformers who once found a potential avenue of influence in the Board of Indian Commissioners.

The unsuccessful attempt at church-assigned agencies did have "the value of proving that the defects of United States Indian policy were matters of far greater significance than

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[13]It is interesting to note that despite disproportionately large contributions to Indian missions, the Catholic Church was virtually excluded from the assignments by the Protestant-oriented government.

mere administrative incompetency."[14] However, the most important result of this attempt was the union between religious officials and non-government reformers fostered by the failure of both the church-assigned agencies and the Board of Commissioners. The coalescence of these two powerful influences in such organizations as the Lake Mohonk Conferences would prove far more effective than anything realized by either individual experiment.

A third attempt to realign the structure of Indian policy formation had similarly significant ramifications for late nineteenth century reform. Beginning in 1867, a prolonged debate raged around the War Department's attempt to extend its authority over warring tribes to include all tribes and all aspects of Indian policy making. As in the case of the arguments supporting church-assigned agencies, the transfer of Indian policy authority was presented in part as a remedy for the malfeasance and ineffectiveness surrounding the administration of Indian policy.[15] This argument rested upon the idea that consolidating authority for both hostile and peaceful tribes under the War Department would streamline policy formulation and administration. Furthermore, advocates of transfer contended that the virtues of military discipline would eliminate the various facets of corruption that plagued

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[14]Priest, *Stepchildren*, 28.

[15]The transfer issue concerned shifting authority over Indian Affairs from the Interior Department to the War Department.

Indian Affairs.

Ultimately, the military defeated its own attempt to take full control of Indian affairs. First, the nature of the military itself doomed the transfer issue. The obvious legacy of violence between the military and Indians seemed enough to disqualify the War Department's claim to extend its control to peaceful tribes, and more than enough to discredit its assertions of the capability to deal subtly with the more fundamental issues facing policy makers. Second, non-violent concerns were increasingly becoming the standard. As hostilities waned by the late 1870s and the army successfully subdued most tribes by 1880, the military found itself becoming superfluous in the realm of Indian affairs. "At last the Indian everywhere was a ward in fact as in theory, and this was a consideration of profound consequence to policy formation. The army itself had made transfer a dead issue."[16]

With violence becoming less central to policy debate and with authority over Indian affairs securely in the hands of the Interior Department by the early 1880s, policy makers turned their attention to the questions of dealing with an increasingly peaceful Indian population.

As the decline in Indian-white armed conflict allowed reformers to more fully direct their attention to non-military policy concerns, the solidification of the reservation system effectively established Indians as stationary targets for

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[16]Dippie, *Vanishing,* 149.

those policies. Eventually, the reservation system mandated the forcible concentration of Indians onto greatly reduced portions of their traditional lands, when possible. However, this was not always the preferred approach. Although rounding up Indians and concentrating them on presently unwanted land was an American tactic dating back to the Jeffersonian era, the predominant proposal for much of the nineteenth century involved relocating all tribes to one or two pan-Indian reservations. Experience proved such an approach unworkable and eventually untenable, as the tragedies surrounding Ponca, Nez Perce, and Cheyenne removal and concentration mobilized determined opposition and killed the concentration appeal by 1887. Besides, restricting tribes to tiny reservations upon their homeland offered particular advantages. Not only did it free much land in many districts to white settlement without sacrificing an entire region to the fate of "Indian Territory", but, by surrounding small pockets of Indians with white settlements, it also made Indians more susceptible to white culture. Furthermore, rather than withering under disease and depression or resorting to violence--common Indian responses to removal from their beloved homelands--Indians seemed more willing to adopt aspects of white civilization (such as agriculture) when confined upon familiar and revered soil. Thus the reservation system as it came to be by the 1880s established Indians in reformers' eyes exactly as reformers dreamed of having them: stationary, surviving, subdued, and

not entirely opposed to sampling some aspects of white civilization.

The process of Indian policy making underwent a critical revision when, in 1871, a House-Senate conflict over the power to ratify Indian treaties resulted in the abolition of the treaty system itself; the strategy that had guided Indian-white relations since the colonial era came to an abrupt end. No longer to be treated as "foreign" nations, Indians were now subject to direct legislation. But the motives behind this change ran much deeper than political maneuvering, for the abolition of the treaty system represented the realization of a desire expressed throughout Indian-white relations: that whites could directly impose what they saw as best for the Indians. The implications are profound. Direct legislation dismissed the Indian consent which had at least been required in theory under the treaty system.[17] The path was cleared to enable the imposition of entirely white-formulated reform. Priest saw this development as a watershed, "the first step toward Indian absorption."[18] Similarly, Prucha argued that humanitarian reformers enthusiastically advocated the elimination of the treaty system as a crucial step toward ending

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[17]Although in practice under the treaty system Indian rights were not staunchly protected: an 1865 clause stated that the Senate could modify treaties without Indian consent. See Priest, *Stepchildren,* 100.

[18]Ibid., 105.

tribal sovereignty and thus civilizing individual Indians.[19] Ultimately, the abolition of the treaty system eliminated the major theoretical impediments to the program of Americanizing the Indians: Indian consent and, therefore, officially acknowledged Indian opposition.

Another critical development in the realm of Indian policy reform came with the stimulation of public interest and the resulting explosion of reform groups in the 1880s. This increased public involvement was part of the general reform boom that marked this era. Yet this burgeoning public concern for reform had definite repercussions for Indian affairs in particular. Specifically relating to the impact on issues relating to Indians, Priest offered an unequivocal estimation of this period, contending that "more people were interested in Indian affairs in 1880 than at any previous period of American history."[20] Distressed by the tragedy of Indian removals, the corruption and squabbling that marred even the highest levels of governmental policy making, and the increasing trespass into Indian territory (as seen in Oklahoma and the Black Hills), the American consciousness of Indian affairs finally began to transcend its prior lassitude and ignorance. The public was now engaged and becoming informed.

To a degree unrealized before, the public directed its attention and efforts toward remedying its particular image of

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[19]Prucha, *Great Father,* 528.

[20]Priest, *Stepchildren,* 53.

the "Indian Problem." Mobilized into and by powerful reform organizations such as the Indian Rights Association and the Lake Mohonk Conferences, concerned citizens exerted a profound influence upon United States Indian policy. The "thorough reformation of American Indian policy was accomplished by a group of powerful organizations which united for the purpose of righting the wrongs of the past."[21] Unfortunately, righting the wrongs of the past typically involved measures that denied any hint of Indian self-determination.

Thus by the early 1880s the context for massive Indian policy reform--the reform that would fall under the prime directive of complete assimilation--was firmly in place. A fresh commitment to benevolent and just measures guided those involved in Indian affairs, yet an omnipresent military threat remained intact to ensure that white visions of benevolence could be forced upon Indians. Authority over Indian affairs lay solidly within the government and in the hands of the Interior Department, and the abolition of the treaty system officially removed Indian consent from the process of policy making. Prevented from affecting Indian affairs directly, concerned laymen and religious figures cultivated substantial influence upon policy through budding and powerful organizations. At the same time, piqued public interest challenged the government to seek a peaceful, permanent, and quick solution to the persistent "Indian Problem." And the Indians,

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[21]Ibid., 80.

despite tenacious opposition to so many expressions of white-imposed policy, were confined to shrinking reservations and viewed as no more than easy targets for every whim of assimilationist reform that whites planned to force upon them in the name of Indian happiness.

While all of these developments enabled pursuit of the program of assimilation that was embraced in the ensuing years, they did not mandate such a program. Yet late nineteenth century Indian policy reformers continued zealously and determinedly along the road to assimilation, or more properly, the road to annihilation of all aspects of Indian cultures. The crucial component of this annihilation was coerced education, in which the imposition of English and the prohibition of Indian languages represented paramount concerns.

III. "THE HABITS AND ARTS OF CIVILIZATION": THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN EDUCATION

In order to understand the development of policies relating to the imposition of the English language and the prohibition of Indian languages, one must look to the more general issue of education; the specific aims of language policy fall under the broader initiatives of Indian education, and the seeds of the concerted policy to eliminate Indian languages exist in the earliest impulses to "civilize" Indians through education.

Education in general and the specific language policies were not entirely the same. For example, industrial training and manual labor--relatively but not completely distinct from language acculturation, as soon will be demonstrated--always held conspicuous positions in the overall education program. Yet education and the language policies remain inseparably intertwined and often indistinguishable. Education in English and the attempt to exclude and thereby eradicate Indian languages represented the heart of the entire education program and were intrinsic to "civilizing" didactical efforts. And as one definitive study of teaching American Indians

expressed it, since all subjects were to be taught in English, "in a sense all [an Indian's] teachers are teachers of English."[1] Moreover, success in education depended upon success in learning English. Another study laid out the critical nature of this relationship between language and education, arguing that "comprehending the meaning and significance of words in relation to culture is an important, if not the overriding difficulty Indian students have in school."[2] Ultimately, the assimilationist sentiments, methods, and aims of both education in general and language policy specifically were identical in their cultural intolerance.

The significance of education itself is not to be underestimated. White Americans held an absorbing faith in the power of schooling to accomplish the ultimate objective of "civilizing" the Indians. And as this faith evolved into the catalyst for the late nineteenth century reform impulse of complete assimilation, education emerged as a central concern of Indian policy. Prucha, in his comprehensive examination of the history of United States Indian policy, contended that

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[1]Sirarpi Ohannessian, *The Study of the Problems of Teaching English to American Indians: Report and Recommendations*, 18.

[2]William A. Brophy and Sophie Aberle, *The Indian: America's Unfinished Business, Report of the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 139, as quoted in Brewton Berry, *The Education of the American Indians: A Survey of the Literature*, 78.

"education of the Indians was the ultimate reform."[3] The development of government Indian education represented the encompassing framework of this reform, the language policies its cornerstone.

The confidence in education as the solution to the tremendous misunderstandings and difficulties that characterized Indian-white relations in the United States manifested itself in specific policies as early as 1794. In that year, a treaty with the Oneida, Tuscorara, and Stockbridge Indians became the first to include educational provisions. Although in terms of education this particular treaty intended only instruction in the industrial arts of the miller and sawyer, it lay the foundation for explicit government involvement in "civilizing" Indians through education. It was soon followed by pedagogical considerations of a decidedly more academic flavor: in 1803, a treaty with the Kaskaskia Indians provided for the support of a Catholic priest to instruct the Indians in literature.[4]

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[3]Prucha, *Great Father,* 687.

[4]Felix Cohen, *Felix Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law,* 239. My concern throughout this examination is the development of Indian education as it led to the late nineteenth century prohibition of Indian languages. I therefore concentrate primarily on United States Indian education policy, for it is in this realm that the program to eradicate Indian languages was conceived and implemented. Thus I do not explore the extensive religious involvement in Indian education during this and earlier time periods. It is important to recognize, however, that missionaries were engaged in Indian education as early as the colonial era, primarily as a means of converting the Indians. Furthermore, religious education of the Indians included and encouraged the utilization of

Picked up quickly by Congress, Indian education rapidly gained ground and momentum. In 1802, Congress authorized the appropriation of up to $15,000 a year to encourage "civilization among the aborigines."[5] After President Monroe emphasized the importance of civilizing the Indians in his 1817 address to Congress, such sentiments were formulated into the watershed Civilization Fund of March 3, 1819, which an eminent scholar of Indian affairs argued "still stands as the organic legal basis for most of the educational work of the Indian service."[6]

This legislative measure, an "act making provision for the civilization of the Indian tribes adjoining the frontier settlements," authorized the administration of funds through the existing structures of "benevolent societies" to educate Indians in agriculture, reading, writing, arithmetic, and other "habits and arts of civilization."[7] Furthermore, it set

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instruction in Indian languages, as demonstrated by the *Indian Bible* (1661), *The Indian Primer* (1664), and the *Logick Primer* (1672), all in the Massachusett language. The religious use of Indian languages persisted, and in the late nineteenth century this led to the direct and heated confrontation with the government over language policy. For a good examination of the earliest efforts to extend white education to the Indians in this country, see Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783*.

[5]Act of March 30, 1802, 2 Stat. 139, 143, as cited in Cohen, *Handbook*, 239.

[6]Cohen, *Handbook,* 239.

[7]*United States Statutes at Large,* vol. III, 516-17, as cited in Alice C. Fletcher, *Indian Education and Civilization,* 163.

in place the ultimate federal directive, empowering the President, at his discretion, to employ the individuals and methods necessary to introduce Indians to "civilization."[8]

Lest the impression arise that these developments in United States Indian policy served to fill a vacuum in American Indian education, some important examples require consideration. As early as 1805--prior to removal--the Choctaw had established a school of their own in their territory. By 1841 and 1842, common school systems had been initiated by the Cherokee and Choctaw, respectively, before many states had developed public school programs.[9]

Such evidence illuminates what would become an essential component of United States Indian education policy--coercion. Typically couched in arguments that Indians either resisted or neglected any attempts to grant them the blessings of white education and that in fact they had no inclination toward education of any kind, reformers incessantly intoned the necessity of forcing education upon Indians. Despite the above evidence that Indian nations were vigorously cultivating formal education--indeed predating some white educational

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[8]Cohen, *Handbook,* 239-40. Remarkably, the principles of this guiding directive of Indian affairs are reiterated in almost duplicate terms in an 1884 compilation of the laws of United States Indian Affairs. *Laws of the United States Relating to Indian Affairs,* 37.

[9]Treaty of October 18, 1820, with the Choctaw Nation, articles 7 & 8, 7 Stat. 210; and regarding common schools, Blauch, (n.p.), 33, both as cited in United States, Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Law,* 273.

developments--assertions of the need for coercion exist throughout the documents of even the earliest Indian education policy. Secretary of War J.C. Calhoun lectured in 1820 that those engaged in education must "impress on the minds of the Indians the friendly and benevolent views of the Government towards them, and the advantage to them in yielding to the policy of the Government, and cooperating with it in such measures as it may deem necessary for their civilization and happiness." More succinctly, Calhoun stated that "[the Indians] should be taken under our guardianship; and our opinion, and not theirs, ought to prevail in measures intended for their civilization and happiness."[10]

While federal policies advocating coercion developed early as integral components of Indian education, the same cannot be said for policies concerning instruction in the English language.[11] In fact, one historian asserted that in the first part of the nineteenth century, no specific reference to language appeared in government policy relating to Indian education--except for one notable exception. In the May 6, 1828 treaty with the Cherokee, article 5 stated that "it is further agreed by the U.S. to pay $1,000 . . . towards

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[10]*American State Papers, Indian Affairs,* volume II, 200, 201, as cited in Fletcher, *Education,* 164.

[11]It should be noted that although the federal government did not at this time specifically address issues of language instruction, religious educators did: the missions were busily utilizing Indian vernaculars in their proselytizing efforts. To this the government paid little, if any, attention.

the purchase of a Printing Press and Types to aid towards the Cherokees in the progress of education, and to benefit and enlighten them as people, *in their own language*."[12]

Although formal United States policy at this time apparently encouraged "civilizing" endeavors that supported some degree of language and cultural diversity, another particularly revealing morsel of evidence requires inclusion. One Reverend Samuel Worcester, an educator who helped get the Cherokee syllabary put into print and bought a printing press for *The Phoenix*, the Cherokee bilingual newspaper, found his philanthropic efforts cut short when he was arrested for being on the reservation without a permit. He did a year and a half hard labor in the Georgia state penitentiary.[13] Despite articulated government policy, education in Indian languages was not whole-heartedly encouraged.

Although the Indian population of the United States doubled between 1845 and 1868 due to the acquisition of extensive lands in the West and Southwest, paltry gains in government education attended the dramatic increase in educational responsibility. Government contributions to funding Indian education remained negligible throughout the period. Those individuals and organizations involved in

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[12]Cited in Leibowitz, "Language Policy," 1 n. 5.

[13]Laurence French, *Psychocultural Change and the American Indian: An Ethnohistorical Analysis,* 155. This inconsistency between federal policy and local enforcement reflects the discordance that often existed between local, state, and federal interests in issues of Indian affairs.

Indian education had to rely on either tribal funds--monies usually acquired through the selling of land to the government--or on support from benevolent institutions.[14] In fact, the Indian Commissioner himself remarked in 1849 that "nearly the whole of the large amount required for the support and maintenance of the schools now in operation is furnished by the Indians themselves out of their national funds."[15] Regarding those funds not drawn from the Indians themselves, the Commissioner's report of 1855 noted that "private benevolence" had accounted for eight times as much as government contributions to Indian education over the previous ten years. Both the Secretary of the Interior in 1865 and the Indian Commissioner in 1868 continued to encourage and court missionary involvement in Indian education.[16] Religious organizations not only bore a substantial part of the financial burden, they also undertook the majority of the work: "missionaries continued to be the primary agents of the government's program for Indian improvement."[17]

During this era, however, expanding government interest and direct participation in Indian education gradually

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[14]Evelyn C. Adams, *American Indian Education: Government Schools and Economic Progress,* 44-45.

[15]*Executive Documents,* 31 Congress, 1 session, vol. III, part 2, 956, as cited in Fletcher, *Education,* 166.

[16]*Message and Documents,* 1855-86, 561; *Report of Indian Commissioner,* 1865, iv; and *Report of Indian Commissioner,* 1868, lxxix, lxxx; all as cited in Fletcher, *Education,* 166-7.

[17]Prucha, *Great Father,* 526.

replaced the earlier absence of substantial government involvement. By the mid-1860s, the government had developed a decidedly more engaged approach. Perhaps this heightened involvement commenced with the report of an 1865 congressional committee which, following a tour of the West, recommended education as the best policy for the government to follow regarding the Indians, it being more humane and, not insignificantly, less costly than war.[18] But the definite watershed came with the Peace Commission report of 1868. In addition to recommending concentration on reservations as a means to eliminate Indian hostility, the commission denounced Indian cultures, advocated enforced education and, quite notably, recommended the substitution of English for Indian dialects.[19] Furthermore, the report identified language as the central problem: "in the difference of language today lies two-thirds of our trouble. Schools should be established which children should be required to attend; their barbarous dialects would be blotted out and the English language substituted."[20] This dramatic honing of the government's policy and intent also represented the first explicit mention of the English language

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[18]Adams, *American Indian Education,* 43. Adams does not cite the source information for this congressional report.

[19]Ibid., 43.

[20]Peace Commission Report of 1868, quoted in Supt. of Indian Schools, *Sixth Annual Report*, 10 (1887), as cited in Leibowitz, "Language Policy," 2.

pertaining to education in the Indian schools.[21]

The Peace Commission's redirection of government attention toward the significance of language unleashed a rancorous and protracted conflict with religious organizations. This language controversy served as the catalyst for the push to expand government involvement in and control over Indian education.[22] At this time, missionary schools were still predominant and were in fact substantially funded by the government. But, sparked by the Peace Commission's report identifying language as the major source of problems in Indian-white relations, the government became increasingly hostile toward mission-run schools and their bilingual programs.[23] President Grant himself engaged in the controversy, openly criticizing the missions' use of Indian languages in their schools. By 1879, missionary societies were

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[21]Ibid.

[22]That the language controversy became the catalyst for the federal government's determined efforts to control Indian education raises an interesting question of causality. It is doubtful that some nascent, monomaniacal animosity toward bilingualism led the government to suddenly confront religious groups on the issue of instruction in Indian vernaculars. Instead, it is more likely that the government recognized that, unless it moved to take control of Indian education, it would find itself locked out of the next crucial sphere of Indian affairs. Regardless of the impetus for the government's preoccupation with language instruction, the language controversy remains critical: behind it rallied a government intransigent in its insistence that Indian education involve English exclusively. Upon this foundation was built the entire structure of government Indian education in the late nineteenth century.

[23]Ibid.

threatened with the cessation of government funding if they did not comply with the government prohibition of Indian dialects.[24] The conflict intensified, and eventually, with the Appropriation Act of June 7, 1897, Congress ended government funding of sectarian schools.[25] Thus the United States government would realize its goal of taking over Indian education and shaping it entirely to its newly defined parameters. "As many mission schools were gradually displaced by government schools, the language controversy subsided, and active interest in native dialects did not reappear until the enactment of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934."[26]

The preoccupation with language effectively launched the next period of government involvement in Indian education, the era Adams identified as that of "full government responsibility."[27] By 1869 the government's intent had been sharpened into plans for a definite program, and the Board of Indian Commissioners proposed that "schools should be established, and teachers be employed by the Government to introduce the

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[24]Adams, *American Indian Education,* 50. Ironically, bilingual religious education--including use of the Bible in Indian languages--received government approval after 1888 when the denominations successfully argued that prohibiting such instruction in native tongues inhibited religious inculcation and thereby constituted religious persecution.

[25]Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Law*, 119.

[26]Adams, *American Indian Education,* 50-51.

[27]Ibid., 47.

English language in every tribe."[28] In 1870, the federal government's piqued interest resulted in Congress's approval of the first annual appropriation specifically for Indian schools, and the figures designated continued to expand greatly.[29] Although the government still relied heavily on mission schools--self-supported or government subsidized through the contract/per capita payment system--it continued to extend its power in the realm of Indian education by, in 1871, striking down the treaty system. The ramifications of this event were significant. By this measure, the government freed itself from the methods, obligations, and technically consensual nature of the treaty system. Moreover, the government could now directly fund--and therefore more directly and unilaterally control--Indian education on its own terms and in its own schools.

The government promptly began establishing its own schools--schools where government policies could be imposed without interference from the more culturally tolerant missions. And to the central pedagogical theme of English-only instruction the government added a commitment to a new facet of Indian education: compulsory attendance. Although prior to 1871 several treaties had included mandatory attendance provisions and penalties (such as withholding rations)

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[28]Board of Indian Commissioners Report, included in *ARCIA*, 1869, in *Congressional Series Set,* serial 1414, 492.

[29]Prucha, *Great Father,* 597; Adams, *American Indian Education,* 48.

for failure to comply, "compulsory education was not a common feature . . . up to the cessation of treaty-making in 1871."[30] The new government role indicated a significant alteration in policy, however, and in 1877, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs advocated compulsory education across the board for Indian children between the ages of six and fourteen.[31]

According to Commissioner of Indian Affairs General Thomas J. Morgan, the United States Government finally assumed full responsibility in 1876 when, in his words, "the work of Indian education, in the modern acceptance of the term, was entered upon by the government."[32] Regardless of the precision of his dating, the fact remains that government involvement intensified tremendously at this time. And with the United States increasingly shunning religious involvement and relegating the missions to a dwindling role, the government channeled its energies toward new concerns. Questions of the who and what of Indian education had already been answered with the replies of government-led schooling and strictly English instruction. The issue now became one of how--the alternatives for the moment being either day or boarding schools.

In this debate, the central concern was cultural impact. Boarding schools separated Indian children from their family

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[30]Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Law,* 277.

[31]*ARCIA*, 1877, 3.

[32]Thomas J. Morgan, *Indian Education,* 20.

and their culture. In the hopes of educators, such an arrangement would facilitate a more thorough indoctrination in white American culture and, simultaneously, a more complete eradication of Indian cultures. Day schools, on the other hand, allowed Indian students to stay on their reservations and return to their homes after each day of instruction. Under this system, children would remain within what Lame Deer affectionately called the "warm blanket" of the tribal community, where they would be constantly vulnerable to what Thomas J. Morgan reviled as the "heathenish life" and "great down-pull of the camp."[33] Such white sentiments toward the effects of traditional Indian communities on white education efforts were not novel. An 1826 Indian report suggested that land and implements be provided Indian students so that they could maintain their educated state and avoid "being thrown back into uneducated Indian settlements."[34] Superintendent Robinson of the Haskell Institute, a prominent boarding school in Lawrence, Kansas, characterized the problem as "children leaving even the best of training schools for their homes, like the swine return to their wallowing filth, and

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[33]Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions,* 34, as cited in Coleman, *School,* 30; Morgan, *Indian Education,* 8,9.

[34]*American State Papers,* 19 Congress, 2 session, vol. 1, 507-508, as cited in Fletcher, *Education,* 165.

barbarism."[35]

This ethnocentrism reveals reformers' attitudes toward all things Indian, graphically illustrating the kind of thinking that had direct and profound implications for education in general, as well as for policy specifically relating to language. In 1877, Commissioner Ezra Hayt declared that "the exposure of children who attend only day-schools to the demoralization and degradation of an Indian home neutralized the efforts of the schoolteacher, especially those efforts which are directed to advancement in morality and civilization."[36] When by the schoolteachers' civilizing efforts reformers meant the attempt to impose the English language on Indian students, the sentiments were unequivocal. One Commissioner complained that "it is also well-nigh impossible to teach Indian children the English language when they spend twenty hours out of the twenty-four in the wigwam, using only their native tongue. The boarding school, on the contrary, takes the youth under constant care, has him always at hand." To cope with what he claimed to be no less than the "urgent necessities of this case," this same commissioner

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[35]Report from the school at Lawrence, Kansas, in *ARCIA*, 1888, 262. Besides advocating thirteen years of compulsory education as the "speedy end to complaints of returning to blankets and barbarism," the superintendent did add, interestingly, that "in some respects the [Indian child] is more highly endowed by nature than the Anglo-Saxon, and the Indian child with equal advantages will exceed the white child in some branches of education."

[36]*ARCIA*, 1877, 3.

promptly requested a significant increase in expenditures.[37]

Such concern and zeal could not be denied, and boarding schools became the preferred recipients of growing government allocations for Indian education. The establishment of schools of this ilk was neither sluggish nor irresolute. In 1878, the Hampton Institute of Virginia was created. A year later, the epitome of Indian boarding schools, the Carlisle Indian School of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was founded by Captain Richard Pratt, the father of Indian boarding school education.

Pratt, one of the driving forces in Indian education from the mid-1870s on, defined a whole new direction for Indian education policy. A veteran of the Civil War and the Indian Wars--where he was assigned to the 10th cavalry, a black regiment, and commanded Indian scouts--Pratt first became involved in Indian education after being detailed to select and accompany a group of seventy-two Cheyenne and Kiowa prisoners of war to Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida. Convinced that their imprisonment could be productive, Pratt instructed the Indians in industrial arts. In 1878, with their confinement brought to an end, 17 of the former prisoners elected to accompany Pratt to his new assignment at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, a school already noted for its work with freedmen. Despite his enthusiasm for Indian education, Pratt was troubled by having

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[37]*ARCIA*, 1873, 9.

to instruct Indians at the same institution as blacks. Fearing that what he saw as the deeper and harsher white prejudices versus blacks would, by association, hinder the assimilation of Indians, Pratt petitioned the government for a separate Indian school at the abandoned army barracks at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The government finally consented, and in October 1879, Carlisle Indian School opened with 82 Sioux pupils. There Pratt remained as superintendent until 1904.

In an era when even the Indian capability to learn was still questioned, Pratt's success at Carlisle stood as dramatic testimonial to both Indian and institutional potential. To gain support for his school, his methods, and for his claims of Indian capacities, Pratt undertook a massive promotional program to display the achievements of Indian education at Carlisle. This program included lecture tours, exhibition of students at public events, high-profile football games against Ivy League schools, and the publication and distribution of student-penned newspapers. In fact, Prucha sums up Pratt's ultimate contribution as "not in promoting this impossible dream" of the complete assimilation of Indians through education, but in "awakening public opinion to the capabilities of the Indians and in mobilizing forces to promote their education."[38]

Pratt's accomplishments in education coincided with developments in the realm of science that asserted the

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[38]Prucha, *Great Father,* 699.

abilities of Indians to learn. A distinct pessimism had marked the early to mid-nineteenth century's scientific opinions regarding Indian intelligence, as the dominant themes of the era--such as concepts of polygenism and biological determinism--imposed rigid theoretical ceilings on Indian capacities.[39] The subsequent contributions of scientists such as Lewis Henry Morgan and Charles Darwin, however, rejuvenated positive evaluations of Indian intellectual capabilities.[40]

Nonetheless, prejudiced scientific opinions versus Indians continued unabated, unhindered by such intellectual developments. First of all, the central, abiding theme of nineteenth century ethnological theory was that societies

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[39]Scientific opinions regarding race in the mid to late 1880s were dominated by the innovative and influential American School. The main tenet of this intellectual trend was polygenism--that different races were created separately and were therefore biologically distinct. This line of thinking rationalized the idea that Indians were a perpetually inferior race. For discussions of the science of this era, see Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880*; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*; and William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots*. Bieder argues that the failure of early nineteenth century philanthropic efforts to convince Indians to adopt white culture led to the abandonment of Enlightenment theories of monogenism and equal human capacities--and created the foundation for the American School of scientific thought, 11-12. Stanton characterized the American School's rejection of the innate equality of human beings the "battle . . . between science and the American dream," 2, and Gould, quoting the French philosopher Condorcet, argued that theories of biological determinism made "nature herself an accomplice in the crime of political inequality," 21.

[40]Concepts of environmentalism and evolution "reached full-force in the post-Civil War ethnology of Lewis Henry Morgan," strengthened by "increasing acceptance of Darwinian evolution in the United States." Bieder, *Science,* 249.

develop along a continuum from savagery to civilization.[41] Moreover, a definite racial hierarchy endured despite other revisions in theory: "in assessing the impact of science upon eighteenth- and nineteenth-century views of race, we must first recognize the cultural milieu of a society whose leaders and intellectuals did not doubt the propriety of racial ranking--with Indians below whites, and blacks below everybody else."[42] Although asserting that Indians were fully capable of learning, ethnologists such as Morgan meant only that Indians were capable of adapting to the superior culture of white Americans. In fact, "culture to most Americans . . . was not so much a way of describing how people behaved as an idea of how they ought to behave and did not."[43] Even in the minds of progressive scientists, white culture maintained as the standard by which to gauge all others. The notion that Indians were an inferior race that must be helped

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[41]Ibid., 13.

[42]Gould, *Mismeasure,* 31.

[43]Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence*, 30. A word about context is required here. May is explicitly referring to the American perspective in 1912, a perspective grounded in encompassing convictions of the absolute superiority of (white) American culture. However, a central theme of May's argument is that these ideas survived intact from the nineteenth century. Thus the genteel tradition's self-confident ideas regarding culture and American cultural superiority apply to the era of Pratt and Morgan. In fact, May argues that it was not until the after the first decade of the twentieth century that a cultural revolution finally shook these beliefs to their core.

up the developmental ladder remained intact.[44]

The coincidence of the accomplishments at Carlisle and the resurgence of positive theories of Indian intellectual capabilities was critical. At the same time that scientists were hypothesizing that Indians could be culturally assimilated into white society, Pratt proved them correct. Yet the role of science requires closer examination. While late nineteenth century scientists were more inclined to assert Indian capabilities, "the contributions of ethnographic research to government Indian policy and to missionary endeavors were . . . indirect and minimal. Most probably both government and church policy would have remained the same in the absence of a science of ethnology."[45] In fact, science is best understood not as determining social policy, but as an undertaking itself profoundly shaped by the social and political climate. "Science, since people do it, is a socially imbedded activity . . . Much of its change through time does not record a closer approach to absolute truth, but the alteration of cultural contexts that influence it so strongly."[46] Furthermore, "when the ratio of data to social impact is low, a history of scientific attitudes may be little more than an oblique record of social change. The history of

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[44]Not until Franz Boas's assertion of cultural relativism would the social evolution theories of Morgan and Pratt be effectively challenged by science.

[45]Bieder, *Science,* 249.

[46]Gould, *Mismeasure,* 21-22.

scientific views on race, for example, serves as a mirror of social movements."[47] The relationship between science and social policy in the nineteenth century was even more direct, for "as privileged members of society, more often than not [scientists] end up defending existing social arrangements as biologically foreordained."[48] This is not to argue that scientists bent facts and theories to fit ignoble objectives. Most did not. But most of those people engaged in science--what Gould calls a "gutsy, human enterprise"--demonstrated the pitfalls inherent in any human activity.[49] Nineteenth century science merely reflected the persistent American notions of the superiority of whites.

If science largely reflects society's assumptions, it took Pratt and Carlisle to convince American society--scientists and policy makers included--of the Indians' capacity to learn. This growing confidence in the ability of Indians to be acculturated through education in white American civilization launched the government's concerted efforts of assimilation. This underscores the magnitude of the educational accomplishments at Carlisle. More accurately, it underscores the accomplishments of the Indian students themselves. Ironically, then, it was Indian children who, through their abilities to learn the ways of a foreign culture,

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[47]Ibid.

[48]Stephen Jay Gould, *Ever Since Darwin,* 15.

[49]Gould, *Mismeasure,* 21.

inadvertently enabled and encouraged the educational program designed to obliterate Indian cultures.

Although the Carlisle experience revolutionized white opinions of the intellectual capabilities of Indians, Pratt's individual influence upon all Indian education efforts to follow involved aspects unfavorable to Indian interests. Despite the fact that examples of his compassion and respect for Indians are not uncommon, ultimately Pratt's program sought the unqualified annihilation of Indian culture and identity. According to Pratt, the solution to the Indian problem lay in complete integration and assimilation. Thus he rejected reservations and any proposals of segregation. He went as far as calculating, perhaps merely for dramatic effect, that with 260,000 Indians in the United States and 2,700 counties, Indians could be divided up so that the nine to a county would most fully benefit from immersion in white culture.[50] He criticized ethnologists for trying to preserve Indian culture and embolden Indian cultural pride.[51] And Pratt's army affiliation should not escape attention. Following Pratt's example, the military continued to play a prominent role in the government program to educate/civilize the Indians, further strengthening the argument that the intent was not especially philanthropic.

On one hand such characteristics simply identify Pratt as

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[50]Elaine Goodale Eastman, *Pratt: The Red Man's Moses,* 221.

[51]Prucha, *Great Father,* 699.

in key with late nineteenth century Indian education reform sentiments. His seemingly paradoxical approach combining paternalism, compassion, intolerance of cultural diversity, sincere concern, ethnocentrism, unflagging devotion to Indian education, and a belief that the Indians' best interest lay in the abandonment of all things Indian merely represented the overwhelmingly dominant breed.

Yet Pratt stands not merely as the reflection of such an approach to Indian education, but as the instigator. Since his example in many ways proved to the public and the government the plausibility of Indian education, the Carlisle precedent became the prototype. And though his model (of eastern boarding institutions) would eventually give way to reservation schools, his philosophy endured: although reservation schools were increasingly adopted, this was in large measure because they enabled a more encompassing, more direct white influence upon Indian communities, thereby facilitating the assimilation of an even larger number of Indians--the ultimate and primary aim of Pratt's endeavors.

Meanwhile, the government continued to solidify its control over Indian education. The independence of government schools was reaffirmed. In 1885, the Indian Commissioner asserted that the "government should manage its own schools, and the different religious denominations should manage theirs separately. In a word, in the management of schools, the Government should be divorced from sectarian influence or

control."[52] Interestingly, the highly influential and decidedly Protestant Mohonk Conferences also lent their support to this concentration of power, advocating a government school system for Indians.[53]

The growth in federal involvement demonstrated by the commitment to such endeavors as Carlisle fostered streamlining within the government's education program itself. In 1885, the administration of education underwent a degree of centralization when the Education Division, which had fallen under the broader Civilization Division since 1877, was organized separately under the first superintendent of Indian schools, John H. Oberly. Upon assuming his duties, Oberly promptly delivered the first comprehensive analysis of federal Indian education. Oberly's report criticized the government's policy as uncentralized and inadequate, and proposed compulsory attendance as well as uniform schools, textbooks, and teaching methods as the proper remedies.[54] In 1889, a succeeding superintendent and his wife compiled the first comprehensive

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[52]*ARCIA*, 1885, xiv. The report still encouraged religious sects to assist in the "great work of redeeming these benighted children of nature from the darkness of their superstition and ignorance."

[53]Prucha, *Great Father,* 707-712. According to Prucha, this rather insistent contention grew out of Protestant discomfort with the increasing and dominant role played by the Catholic Church in contract schools. Furthermore, the stance of the Mohonk conferences is neither so magnanimous nor so peculiar when one recognizes that the government schools were essentially Protestant in terms of faculty and the flavor of the curriculum.

[54]Adams, *American Indian Education,* 53.

government field report on Indian education. Finding the program marred by incompetence and neglect, the report resulted in the codification of school rules and the establishment of better supervision through the appointment of a field supervisor.[55]

No potential avenue for strengthening the effectiveness of the government's education program slipped past wily policy makers. As an illustration of how productive the combination of manual labor and education had proven, Thomas J. Morgan offered the figure that in one year the students of Carlisle had earned more than $12,000 through their industry.[56] The program of complete assimilation through education helped substantially to pay for itself. While the program may have worked to swallow some of its own financial burden, there were some notable shortcomings beyond merely questions of the ethics of forced labor for profit. For example, the 1884 report of the Indian Commissioner shows that Indian students produced more bushels of corn than the number of students that could read, and the schools possessed nearly as many stock animals as the figure for the highest average monthly

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[55]Ibid., 55.

[56]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 19. Indian students earned money for themselves--through "outings" as domestic workers with white families--and for the educational institutions through industrial and agricultural labors. In this instance, Morgan is not explicit as to who got to keep the $12,000 made from "labors among the Pennsylvania farmers," although the inference is definitely that Carlisle benefitted from the students' earnings.

attendance.[57]

Misdirected emphases and ethical laxity notwithstanding, the combination of education and manual labor was effective regarding some central policy concerns. By requiring Indian students to work, the schools not only funded their own efforts, but simultaneously promoted the assimilation of Indians into white culture. Although students may not have been learning to read, they were learning white methods of industry and agriculture. Furthermore, the students were picking up more subtle aspects of white American culture--such as the English language--through the interaction with whites that their labors entailed.

Throughout all of this, the preoccupation with language was central. "The language issue, which received little attention until the missionary controversy, now blossomed in almost every report concerned with Indian education."[58] Consistent with this preoccupation, the government continued to lay down its language policy without qualifications. In 1881, the Board of Indian Commissioners proclaimed that "the policy adopted of teaching only English in the Government schools is eminently wise . . . we have already raised two generations of Indians by unwise theories of education . . . a better system is now in use, and we trust the time is not far distant when English books and the English language will be

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[57]*ARCIA*, 1884, 282, as cited in Fletcher, *Education*, 192.

[58]Leibowitz, "Language Policy," 3.

exclusively taught in Indian schools."[59]

The time was not distant, and by 1886, the Indian Commissioner declared, there did not exist "an Indian pupil whose tuition and maintenance is paid for by the U.S. government who is permitted to study any other language [than English]."[60] This was no small undertaking. Figures compiled from reports of the commissioners of Indian affairs show that in 1886, there were 531 government schools attempting to impose government language policies upon 21,231 Indian students.[61]

The year 1887 marked what has traditionally been viewed as the culmination of the United States government's program to assimilate the American Indians. With the passage of the pivotal General Allotment Act--the Dawes Act as commonly known--and its attempt to make individual landowners out of Indians through the breakup of tribal landholdings, the assimilation program took shape as an encompassing assault on all things Indian.[62] The essential basis for the tribal

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[59]Supt. of Indian Schools, *Sixth Annual Report*, 10 (1887), as cited in Leibowitz, "Language Policy," 3.

[60]*ARCIA*, 1886, 23.

[61]Ibid., 197.

[62]Named after its chief spokesman, Senator Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, the Dawes Act was intended to carve reservations into 160 acre allotments for the head of each family. These allotments were to be held in trust by the United States for twenty-five years as a measure of protection versus white depredations. Any land not covered by allotment was declared surplus, and therefore open to white settlement. Interestingly, tribal funds acquired through the negotiated government

system itself would be shattered as the Dawes Act eliminated Indian nations' community-held land. Allotment, it was hoped, would individualize the Indians, thereby providing a key step in breaking down Indian identity and transforming Indians into something more like their white neighbors.

Besides tribal landholding, other components of Indian cultures were already restricted. In the 1884 Regulations of the Indian Department, the government sought to abolish the Indians' "heathenish rites and customs" by outlawing the religious sun dance and mounting a determined attack on the influence and practices of those it labeled "impostors"--the revered medicine men.[63] Even the most subtle cultural traits were not exempt. Upon arrival at government schools, Indian children were promptly stripped of their traditional clothing in favor of trousers, ties, and the like. The long hair of arriving students was sheared, despite (or because of) the fact that some Indian people--such as the Navajo--believed long hair to hold spiritual significance and considered the forced cutting of one's hair to be a great disgrace. And Indian languages were already being prohibited, the English language imposed.

Although history has tended to emphasize the significance

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purchase of such "surplus" lands were subject to Congressional appropriation for the purpose of financing Indian education. See *Federal Indian Law,* 116.

[63]United States, *Regulations of the Indian Department (1884)*, 86-89.

of the Dawes Act in Indian assimilation, the role of education deserves the greater attention. Prucha supports this assertion, arguing that "even more important than private property or citizenship under American laws was education."[64] First, the relationship between allotment and education was a symbiotic one. The Dawes Act eliminated tribal land and thereby "civilized" Indians by making them individual landholders, and money acquired from this dispossession was used to finance Indian education in government schools.[65] As the cycle continued, the "civilizing" effects of acculturation through education would, it was hoped, result in freeing even more territory from Indian ownership, bringing the process full circle. More importantly, the success of allotment depended upon the Indians' ability to learn and adopt white concepts of society, ownership, individual rights, etc. Even if the objective of allotment was merely to separate Indians from their tribal lands and not truly to assimilate them, the whole program hinged upon persuading Indians to embrace the white way of life. To this end, education--and its central component of language restrictions--was of paramount importance.

Moreover, in 1887 the government's education program was just hitting full stride. "The early efforts to create an Indian school system look anemic compared with the earnest

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[64]Prucha, *Americanizing,* 7.

[65]See note 62 above.

drive for Indian education that came after the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887."[66] Interestingly, this statement not only asserts the full-blown nature of education endeavors at this time, but also further reveals the symbiosis inherent between allotment and education. Simultaneously, the Lake Mohonk Conferences--the effective right hand of government policy making and the flagship of nineteenth century Indian policy reform--"with a fearful sense of urgency, turned most of its attention to Indian education."[67] Efforts to Americanize the Indians through education proceeded at an unprecedented rate.

The earliest years of the 1890s represented the culmination of assimilationist fervor as the government mobilized efforts to shape an inexorable, encompassing education program intended to completely eradicate Indian cultures. Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1889-1893) General Thomas J. Morgan, "the most significant national figure in Indian education in the nineteenth century," led this final push to, as Morgan put it, "quickly and successfully" solve the "Indian problem."[68] Morgan himself epitomized important intellectual trends of his age and represented the zenith of assimilationist zeal. "His ardent and aggressive Americanism, his unquestioning belief in the public school system, his professional Protestantism (with its corollary of anti-Catholicism), and his deep

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[66]Prucha, *Great Father,* 699.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid., 701; Morgan, *Indian Education*, 6.

humanitarianism brought together strands of American thought that had been slowly but steadily intertwining in the preceding decades . . . Morgan was a symbol . . . that education was the indispensable instrument that would make possible the final goal envisaged for the Indians."[69]

At the time of his appointment as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Morgan, although he had served as secretary of the Rhode Island Indian Rights Association, could claim little experience in issues of Indian policy. Like Richard Henry Pratt, Morgan was a Civil War veteran who had commanded black troops. However, Morgan followed his military service first by becoming a Baptist minister, then by pursuing a career in public education. The vice president of the National Education Association from 1887-89, Morgan also headed state normal schools in Nebraska, New York, and Rhode Island before accepting the position of Indian Commissioner. Despite his lack of experience in issues of Indian Affairs, Morgan's passionate belief in the power of public education perfectly suited him to the present trend in Indian policy, a trend which identified education as the means by which to finally and thoroughly assimilate the Indians.

In 1890, Morgan, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, articulated the encompassing scheme which, as the coalescence of all the components of assimilationist education, was directed at American Indians. The ultimate aims and

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[69]Prucha, *Great Father,* 701.

ethnocentric flavor of Morgan's program are illustrated in his idealistic proclamation:

> When we speak of the education of the Indians, we mean that comprehensive system of training and instruction which will convert them into American citizens, put within their reach the blessings which the rest of us enjoy, and enable them to compete successfully with the white man on his own ground and with his own methods. Education is to be the medium through which the rising generation of Indians are to be brought into fraternal and harmonious relationship with their white fellow-citizens, and with them enjoy the sweets of refined homes, the delight of social intercourse, the emoluments of commerce and trade, the advantages of travel, together with the pleasures that come from literature, science, and philosophy, and the solace and stimulus afforded by a true religion.[70]

Such a panoply of assimilationism put words to the sentiments of the vast majority of those confronting issues of Indian affairs and served as the manifesto of the education program Morgan defined.

Morgan hedged no bets in asserting the potential of his program. "Education, in the broad sense in which it is here used, is the Indians only salvation." Nor did he conceal the ends to which this panacea should be applied. "Education should seek the disintegration of the tribes, and not their segregation. They should be educated, not as Indians but as Americans. In short . . . schools should do for them what they are so successfully doing for all the other races in this

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[70]Morgan, *Indian Education*, 1.

country,--assimilate them."[71]

Furthermore, Morgan's definitive statement of assimilationist education policy left no stone unturned, and he honed its components to develop a plan that would fully and finally extend white education to all the "red children of the forest." To surmount "the stubborn conservatism of centuries, nothing less than universal education should be attempted." By universal, Morgan intended all interpretations of the word. Every aspect of white culture was to be inculcated, every aspect of Indian culture to be obliterated. Morgan exhorted that Indian students be imbued with the "methodical regularity of daily routine" of hours and habits. They must be taught the games, songs, sports and music of whites, must "memorize choice maxims and literary gems in which inspiring thoughts and noble sentiments are embodied," and must be instructed to cultivate cleanliness and politeness. Pictures of "civilized life" were to be hung as examples in every room. Indian students were to "be taught to love the American flag" and to know "little or nothing of the . . . injustice of the white race." They must be taught the ideals of capitalism, including the "true value of money" and that "in the sweat of their faces must they eat bread". In fact, Morgan argued, the very "school itself should be an illustration of the superiority of

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[71]Ibid., 3, 5.

our Christian civilization."[72]

Attendance at these paragons of Christian living was to be equally universal. Not only did Morgan aspire to extend white civilization to all Indians, such an extension was explicitly required: all Indian children whose families lived on reservations were compelled to attend government Indian schools.[73] Morgan offered an ironic rationalization of this policy of compulsory education. "I do not believe that Indians . . . who are a hindrance to civilization and a clog on our progress--have any right to forcibly keep their children out of school to grow up like themselves, a race of barbarous and semi-savages."[74] To ensure that no potential for assimilation would be lost to Indian parents trying to bring their children up like themselves, Morgan advised that "children should be taken at as early an age as possible, before camp life has made an indelible stamp upon them," in some cases "much earlier than six."[75]

The refinement of the government process responsible for implementing educational policies represented another key facet of Morgan's prescription. Morgan argued that the "work

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[72]All quotes in this paragraph come from Morgan, *Indian Education*, 4-11.

[73]Adams, *American Indian Education,* 55-56.

[74]Quoting Morgan to the secretary of the interior, Nov. 30, 1892, in the Henry L. Dawes papers, Library of Congress, as cited in Prucha, *Great Father,* 706.

[75]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 11, 14.

of Indian education should be completely systematized," a recommendation partially fulfilled by the 1890 Codification of Rules for Indian Schools.[76] A clearer image of government responsibility also attended the enhancement of its methods. Morgan advocated the federal government's assumption of the complete burden for Indian education, based at least partially on the realization that such a gesture "would be but a slight compensation to be returned by this vast and rich nation to the original possessors of the soil upon whose lands the nation with its untold wealth now lives."[77]

The government further extended its already encompassing influence over Indian education when, in 1890, the Office of Indian Affairs for the first time authorized the reimbursement of public schools undertaking the instruction of Indian students.[78] This addition to the range of schools--including contract, day, on-reservation, and off-reservation boarding schools--already directly influenced by United States Indian policy came at an important juncture, as the government continued to solidify its control by phasing out mission-run contract schools.[79] At the same time, the government shifted

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[76]Ibid., 3.

[77]Ibid., 18.

[78]Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Law*, 274.

[79]Because of the religious interference and bilingual instruction that accompanied mission school involvement in Indian education, government subsidizing of mission schools through contracts was abolished in 1897.

its emphasis away from boarding schools to the direct cultural influence afforded by reservation institutions, thereby intensifying the acculturative impact upon Indian communities and, it was hoped, attracting more students through the assuaging effect of institutional proximity.[80]

Thus in 1890 Morgan could calculate that approximately 36,000 Indian children of school age (six to sixteen) were the government's responsibility.[81] However, Morgan estimated that perhaps only 15,000 of these 36,000 children were actually enrolled.[82] The government had its work cut out, both in fulfilling its intensified responsibilities toward those Indian children in school and in compelling the abstaining 21,000 or so to attend. This in no way diminished Morgan's resolve, and the Commissioner declared exuberantly that in the program he presented

> there is nothing radically new, nothing experimental or theoretical . . . it is simply an endeavor to put into more systematic and organic form the work in which the government has been earnestly engaged for the past thirteen years, and to carry forward as rapidly as possible to its final consummation that scheme of education which during these years has gradually been unfolding itself.[83]

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[80]Adams, *American Indian Education,* 56.

[81]This figure did not include the approximately 14,000 Indian children for whom education was provided by either the Five Civilized Tribes or the State of New York.

[82]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 3.

[83]Ibid., 20.

According to the United States Government's very Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the comprehensive education program had finally and fully been set in motion and its end--the extirpation of Indian cultures--was in sight.

In the first years of this last decade of the nineteenth century, the government continued to push the envelope of Indian policy, advancing to more stringent and severe policies until backlash forced halt or retreat. For example, in 1891, Congress passed the first bill authorizing the coercion of Indian attendance at school; the policy of compulsory education thus became *de jure*. Next, the Appropriation Act of March 3, 1893 strengthened the above enactment by enabling the Secretary of the Interior to "prevent the issuing of rations of the furnishing of subsistence either in money or in kind" to Indian families whose children as old as twenty-one did not attend school. Such measures "created considerable Indian and public resentment, as did the parallel practice of taking children from their parents and sending them to distant nonreservation boarding schools," and the ensuing Appropriation Act of August 15, 1894 struck down the authorization of such tactics.[84] However, the highwater mark of forced deculturation through education had been set, and the attack on

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[84]Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Law*, 119. Although they could no longer be forced to attend off-reservation boarding schools, the government still required Indian children living on reservations to attend schools on the reservation.

Indian languages endured as the embodiment of the most extreme expressions of assimilation.

IV. "THEIR BARBAROUS DIALECT SHOULD BE BLOTTED OUT": THE SPECIFICS OF LANGUAGE POLICY

Those concerned with Indian education and assimilation assigned tremendous importance to language policy. In order to "get the Indian out of the blanket and into trousers, and trousers with a pocket in them, and with a pocket that aches to be filled with dollars," reformers believed that they must "make the Indian more intelligently selfish before we can make him more unselfishly intelligent."[1] Language represented the key. For example, because "in all the Indian languages there is no word answering to the Latin *habeo*--have or possess," Indians would have to be forced to learn English in order to socialize them to the ways of white culture.[2] Furthermore,

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[1]Merrill E. Gates in *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conferences of Friends of the Indian* (1896), 8-13, reprinted in Prucha, ed., *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880-1900*, 334.

[2]House Committee on Indian Affairs, minority report on land in severalty bill, *House Report no. 1576*, 46 Congress, 2 session, serial 1938, 7-10, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 126.

only the English language would make Indians truly American, for "nothing so surely and perfectly stamps upon an individual a national characteristic as language."[3] The language of white Americans would also prepare Indians to assume full American identity, because "only through the medium of the English tongue can they acquire a knowledge of the Constitution of the country and their rights and duties thereunder."[4]

Yet the benefits of language manipulation derived not just from the imposition of English. In addition, prohibiting both instruction in and use of Indian languages would break down the "impenetrable walls of stone" that such languages represented, thereby more quickly and more fully Americanizing the Indians.[5] Reformers asserted that "teaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect [would be] a positive detriment to him. The first step to be taken toward civilization, toward teaching the Indians the mischief and folly of continuing in their barbarous practices, is to teach them the English language."[6] Moreover, ridding Indians of their language would be, through the elimination of a central

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[3]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxi. This report includes a subheading entitled "The English Language in Indian Schools," which serves as a valuable summary and statement of the government's language policy.

[4]Ibid.

[5]*Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (1888), 11-16, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 213.

[6]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxiii.

component of "inferior" Indian cultures, another essential step in assisting them up the ladder of civilization. In keeping with such beliefs, the government took its prohibition of bilingual instruction a step further and forbade Indian children to communicate in Indian languages: all "conversation of and communications between the pupils and with the teacher must be, as far as practicable, in English."[7] Instruction and conversation exclusively in English would serve to "remove the stumbling blocks of hereditary customs and manners," of which "language is one of the most important elements."[8]

Consequently, the government issued unequivocal language policy mandates. "All instruction must be in English" reads the 1880 regulations from the Indian Office.[9] To effect that end, "only English-speaking teachers should be employed in schools" financed in any way by the government.[10] Furthermore, an 1887 order declared that the prohibition of instruction in Indian languages "applies to all schools on Indian reservations, whether they be Government or mission schools. The instruction of the Indians in the vernacular is not only of no use to them, but is detrimental to the cause of their education and civilization, and no school will be permitted on

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[7]Quoted from the Indian Bureau regulations issued by the Indian Office in 1880, and cited in *ARCIA*, 1887, xx.

[8]*ARCIA*, 1887, xxiii.

[9]Quoted in *ARCIA*, 1887, xx.

[10]Morgan, *Indian Education*, 4.

the reservation in which the English language is not exclusively taught."[11] The scope of government jurisdiction knew no bounds, and thus the ban on teaching in Indian languages was extended to "any school over which the Government has any control, or in which it has any interest whatever."[12] Although prohibition of all communication in Indian languages was not as conspicuous in policy declarations, it was nonetheless as sweeping in scope and as unconditional in exclusivity. Commissioner Morgan decreed that "only English should be allowed to be spoken in schools supported wholly or in part by the government."[13]

Violations of such edicts drew punishment for both institutional and pupil transgressors. A report that bilingual education continued in one school elicited the categorical government response that "the English language only must be taught Indian youth . . . If Dakota or any other language is taught such children, they will be taken away and their support from the Government will be withdrawn from the school."[14] Likewise, Commissioner Morgan exhorted that "no pains should be spared to insure accuracy and fluency in the use of idiomatic English."[15] Thus educators entertained a

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[11]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxii, quoting an order of February 2, 1887.

[12]Ibid., xxii-xxiii, quoting an order of July 16, 1887.

[13]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 4.

[14]Ibid., xxi, quoting an order of 1884.

[15]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 12.

sadistic creativity in developing a penal code that spared no pains for Indian students, violently impressing upon them through rulers, belts, and paddles the intransigence of the white commitment to the exclusivity of English.

Indian schools took prohibition to an extreme, often harshly punishing students for using their native languages in any capacity--at play or even inadvertently. Perhaps such severe proscriptions of Indian languages were improvised in the schools, extrapolations of existing regulations that educators felt necessary to enhance and fully comply with the intent of the language program prescribed by the government. Declarations such as that from the principal of a Northwest boarding school who asserted that "the Indian tongue must be put to silence" certainly dispel any notions of tepid assimilationism on the part of educators.[16] Moreover, the bountiful evidence of policies of absolute prohibition identifies them as widely practiced and accepted in the Indian schools. While the government did not explicitly require such stark prohibitions of Indian languages, the absence of any articulated government disapproval regarding such policies stands to confirm the government's complicity and consent.

The extensive evidence of the absolute prohibition of Indian languages--and the corresponding penalties--exists in the autobiographies of former government Indian school

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[16]Elizabeth Colson, *The Makah Indians: A Study of an Indian Tribe in Modern American Society*, 19.

students. Kay Bennett, Navajo, recalled that at the Toadlena Boarding School in New Mexico, penalties were imposed after holiday breaks to force Indian children to speak English again, and the children had to resort to stealth in order to speak to one another in their own language.[17] Ah-nen-la-de-ni, a former pupil at the Lincoln Institute of Philadelphia, remembered that students were punished for speaking Indian languages by having to stand or march around the yard during recreation periods.[18] Another autobiographer recalled that "we were not allowed to speak the Pima tongue at school. Some students would report on those who spoke Indian, and as punishment *our* mouths would be taped."[19] This particular recollection demonstrates not only that prohibition and attendant penalties existed, but also that the punishment was severe enough that students could use tattling as an effective and threatening tool of revenge and oppression.

The strictly unilingual approach to Indian instruction did, in practical terms, make some sense. Especially at multi-tribal schools like Carlisle--which served as the prototype for all subsequent Indian education efforts--programs which sought to teach students in their native

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[17]Kay Bennett, *Kaibah*, 226-27.

[18]Ah-nen-la-de-ni, "An Indian Boy's Story," *The Independent,* 55 (July 30, 1903), as cited in Coleman, *Education,* 151-2.

[19]Anna Moore Shaw, *A Pima Past,* 127. Emphasis added; notice that apparently Shaw herself engaged in breaking the prohibition of Indian languages.

languages would have been tremendously complicated. Not only would instructors have had to learn Indian languages for which there existed very little instructional material, but the diverse backgrounds of students in many of the schools would have required educators to know and be able to teach in numerous Indian languages. In this light, unilingual education was more viable and, at the same time, entirely consistent with the overriding educational goal of indoctrinating the Indians in white culture. However, such considerations do not justify the unyielding prohibitions of any use of Indian languages.

Imposing exclusively the English language upon Indians of all tribes performed the critical function of helping to construct in reality what had long existed in white minds: the monolithic image of the "Indian," an image which dismissed all aspects of diversity among the numerous Indian groups living in the United States. Moreover, bringing the generic "Indian" out of theory and further into reality was essential to the success of assimilation. Acknowledging or tolerating the extent of Indian cultural diversity would have dealt a crippling blow to a program founded upon notions of the inferiority, simplicity, and essential crudeness of Indian culture.

Rather than passive and unwitting participants, American Indian students played an active and positive role in constructing the image of the "Indian." For instance, in many

schools the students themselves willingly adopted English as a lingua franca. But such efforts were more a part of Indian resistance than of accommodation, for the development of a sense of pan-Indianism has been crucial to the struggle for Indian rights in the United States. Adopting English provided the means for Indian students to transcend the obstacles to Indian solidarity posed by a lack of a common Indian language. Rather than a loss of Indian identity, adoption of English proved a tactic to preserve that identity. Furthermore, the selection of English as the common language was not exclusive. In fact, when feasible, Indian students chose such Indian languages as Sioux to communicate across the language barriers presented by diverse tribal backgrounds.[20] Therefore, while the students' adoption of English contributed to the development of a broader Indian identity beyond traditional tribal distinctions--an identity consistent with the white image of the "Indian"--this adoption represented a choice of expedience and a necessary strategy of communication, not an abandonment of Indian culture in favor of white.

Reformers viewed language as an essential tool for remedying much of the "Indian Problem." Through the proper language policies, a wide range of aspects of Indian culture would be extinguished and, simultaneously, Indians would be

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[20]Coleman, *School,* 140. Coleman provides evidence to demonstrate that both English and Indian languages (including sign languages) were adopted as the lingua franca of various multi-tribal schools.

assimilated. "The object of the greatest solicitude should be to break down the prejudices of tribe among the Indians; to blot out the boundary lines which divide them into distinct nations, and fuse them into one homogeneous mass. Uniformity of language will do this--nothing else will."[21] And by uniformity of language, reformers unquestionably meant the language of white Americans.

Through the exclusivity of the English language, reformers intended not only to eliminate both Indian diversity and culture and to assimilate the Indians, but also to pacify them: "through sameness in language is produced sameness of sentiment, and thought; customs and habits are moulded and assimilated in the same way, and thus in process of time the differences producing trouble would [be] gradually obliterated."[22] In light of the oppression and inequality that plagues Indian-white relations to this date, such statements demonstrate either hypocrisy or substantial miscalculation. Yet to many reformers, the prodigious effects of restricting language use and instruction represented a panacea.

Such unbounded faith in the potential of language policy was fueled by flagrant prejudice and ardent ethnocentrism. The incessant litany of pejorative adjectives unleashed against Indian languages mars nearly every assertion of the

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[21]*ARCIA,* 1887, xx, quoting the 1868 Peace Commission report.

[22]*ARCIA,* 1887, xx, quoting the Peace Commission report.

beneficence of imposing English, and reflects biased sentiments of the ilk expressed by "an Indian agent of long experience" who stated that he "found the vernacular of the Sioux very misleading."[23] Not surprisingly, this particular agent therefore proposed English language instruction as the proper remedy. Such prejudices were generated by remarkable cultural arrogance, perhaps nowhere declared more exuberantly than by J.C.D. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1885-1888, who exalted his "own vernacular--the language of the greatest, most powerful, and enterprising nationalities beneath the sun. The English language as taught in America is good enough for all her people of all races." The ultimate product of such conceit would be the uncompromising attempt to force upon the Indian "the language of his real country."[24]

Ultimately, the program of imposition and prohibition was not about education, but about annihilation of Indian cultures. Secretary of the Interior Schurz demonstrated that effectively educating Indians did not represent the true desire of policy makers by flatly dismissing a proposal to teach in Indian languages using collected Indian grammars as "very interesting and meritorious philological work"

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[23]Ibid., xxiv.

[24]Commissioner Atkins, quoting his own 1886 report and a "leading religious weekly," in *ARCIA,* 1887, xxi, xxv.

impertinent to Indian education.[25] Similarly, the commissioner of Indian affairs decreed that "no books in any Indian languages must be used or instruction given in that language in any school."[26] Education merely provided the pretext, the smokescreen, the cloaking sanction of a formal American institution. If Indian languages could have been effectively prohibited and replaced in Indian homes and Indian communities, then pedagogical fervor would have played an infinitely smaller role in the clamor for English language imposition; the extensive attention devoted to discussions of the impact of day schools (versus boarding schools) on the Indian community reveals how engrossing was the unadulterated desire to banish Indian languages from United States soil. To this end, education served as the enabling institution, not the end itself. Reducing the issue to its utter essentials, the Peace Commission perhaps best expressed the genuine and paramount concern of even those most strenuously engaged in extolling the virtues of Indian education: "their barbarous dialect should be blotted out and the English language substituted."[27]

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[25]Schurz's dismissal is in Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1877, *House Executive Document* no. 1, part 5, serial 1880, 10-11, as cited in Prucha, *Great Father,* 690.

[26]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxii.

[27]Ibid., xx, quoting the Peace Commission report.

V. CREATING THE UNIVERSE THROUGH WORDS: THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE AND THE EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE IMPOSITION AND PROHIBITION

When reformers addressed Indian education, they readily understood the tremendous language differences that stood between Indians and whites. From the earliest contact, these cultures had experienced profound difficulties in communicating verbally, even with translators of varying--and sometimes even reliable and accurate--capabilities. Even when Indians and whites managed to communicate, they spanned profoundly distinct cultural perspectives; a cursory examination of Indian-white relations discloses such massive cultural misunderstandings as those evidenced by the fact that some Indian languages could not express--and therefore could not truly understand--concepts of personal property. Reformers recognized, then, that substantial cultural change would necessarily follow the forced substitution of English for Indian languages. In fact, it is upon this point that white hopes for civilizing the Indians rested. Yet the potentially traumatic implications for Indians were dismissed by white

reformers, under the flag of benevolent paternalism at best and under the colors of oppression and ethnocentrism at worst.

Perhaps most white Americans concerned with Indian education did believe that they were conferring upon Indians the gift of a "higher" language and its corresponding "advanced" culture. Perhaps also they believed that their efforts to impose the English language would truly benefit both Indians and whites by facilitating cross-cultural communication through a common language, thereby resulting in smoother, more peaceable, and more mutually beneficial Indian-white relations. On the other hand, one might argue that adoption of a common language would, in the minds of many self-interested whites, remove one final moral barrier to the dispossession of American Indians: if Indians could speak English, arguments that they did not comprehend the agreements that stole their land, resources, and rights would hold less weight and command less attention. The coincidence of the Dawes Act and the emphasis on cultural assimilation through English language education is profoundly disturbing in this light. Yet if a noted historian of the English language in America saw a common language as the "binding force" that brought and held the nation together after the brutally divisive years of civil war, it is plausible that post-Appomattox Americans hoped to bind the distinct Indian and white American cultures into one peaceful, happier nation by

virtue of the power of a common language.[1]

However, whether they realized it or not--and most reformers did to some extent understand and desire the adverse effects their policies would have upon traditional Indian cultures--imposing the English language and prohibiting the use of Indian languages represented an attempt to deal a devastating blow to Indian cultures.

The importance of language to culture cannot be overemphasized: the ties that bind culture and language are lifelines of identity and understanding. Ultimately, a symbiotic and profound relationship exists between the two, and one can be neither easily distinguished nor disassociated from the other. Yet such an understanding was not fully formulated and explicitly articulated until Franz Boas, the acknowledged father of modern linguistics, delivered the seminal and definitive statement of linguistic relativism in his introduction to *The Handbook of American Indian Languages* in 1911.[2]

In arguing that the study of a language must be undertaken from within the language itself--not by using one's own

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[1]George Philip Krapp, *The English Language in America,* vii. Krapp contends that a common language helped transcend and heal the divisions of the Civil War.

[2]By emphasizing empiricism and asserting the necessity of intensively and thoroughly studying a culture from within, Boas laid the foundations for the modern anthropological approach to studying Indians: cultural pluralism and relativism. His extensive field work with Eskimos and the Indians of the Pacific Northwest provided evidence for his rejection of concepts of raciology and cultural evolution, thereby shattering the previous anthropological assumptions which had linked race and culture.

language as a cultural standard--Boas revolutionized ethnological methodology. Essentially, Boas asserted that in order to understand a culture, one must explore that culture's language in and of itself because only through language can world view, psyche, etc., be understood. Trying to examine cultural concepts and perceptions from the vantage point of another culture's language is unacceptable; all languages are based on assumptions and concepts that obscure the true meaning behind another culture's words. Furthermore, according to Boas, this relationship between language and culture is one of mutual influence: language both affects and reflects culture. Ultimately, cultures perceive the world differently because languages confront the world differently and vice versa.

The work of Benjamin Lee Whorf solidified Boas's concepts of linguistic relativism. Whorf's hypothesis that the form and content of a culture's language affect how members of that culture perceive and therefore react and act toward the world became an axiom of the study of language and culture. And to Boas's arguments linking culture and language, Whorf added another dimension to the particular importance of language. Although language and culture influence each other perpetually, Whorf contended that "in this partnership the nature of the language is the factor that limits free plasticity and rigidifies channels of development in the more autocratic way."[3] The absolutely crucial role played by language in

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[3]Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality*, 156.

shaping culture cannot, according to Whorf, be denied.

Furthermore, Whorf extended the notions of linguistic relativism far beyond the realm of words. He asserted that in essence different cultures operate in distinct realities by virtue of distinct languages. "We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar."[4] Renowned linguist Edward Sapir concurred on this point of perceptual reality being defined by language, stating that "the fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group . . . We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation."[5]

George W. Grace, in his book *The Linguistic Construction of Reality*, took this linguistic relativism even further in a theoretical examination that involves significant implications for United States Indian language policy. Grace's theories emphasize the role of culture in determining the character of our "effective environment" (which Grace distinguished from the *actual* qualities of the external world), a process he referred to as the social construction of reality:

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[4]Ibid., v.

[5]Whorf quoting Edward Sapir in Leslie Spier, ed., *Language, Culture and Personality, Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir,* 75-93, reprinted in Whorf, *Language,* 134.

> The human species--and no other--possesses the one essential tool which makes a social construction of reality possible. That tool is language. Not only is language the means by which this kind of reality construction is accomplished, it is also the means by which the realities, once constructed, are preserved and transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation. Hence, it is entirely appropriate to refer more specifically to the *linguistic* construction of reality.[6]

Grace saw the study of languages as divided into two basic schools of thought. The first, which he termed the *mapping theory*--and which he argued is essentially flawed and therefore at least partially invalid--holds that different languages provide different "mappings" of what is, according to this hypothesis, a world common to all people. Under this theory, all humans know the same physical world directly, albeit through imperfect senses, which therefore results in slightly different understandings of reality.

The second theory is what Grace called the *reality-construction* model, in which he asserted that we do not have direct access to the world, but understand it only through senses which are very incomplete at best (senses that, for example, cannot perceive much of the visual and aural spectrums). Therefore, Grace contended, cultures construct very different models of the world that account for what we do sense. What cannot be accounted for by our senses is

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[6]George W. Grace, *The Linguistic Construction of Reality*, 3.

extrapolated, in essence, by an elaborate system of beliefs, assumptions, and preconceptions, all of which are culturally relative: we fill in the blanks and do so quite differently from culture to culture. These constructed realities are reflected in our languages, and are in fact also shaped by language: "the realities in which we human beings effectively live our lives are realities which we have constructed, and language is the primary instrument of such reality construction."[7]

Now, even if one rejects the *reality-construction* model in favor of the widely accepted *mapping theory*, the fundamental agreement which exists between the two has significance for this study. In both hypotheses, the world imposes limitations on our ability to know it; language represents the reality we do know; and different languages interpret reality very differently. One key point of contention between the two theories is that under the *reality-construction* model, the *intertranslatability postulate*--which is accepted under the *mapping theory* and which holds that anything which can be said in one language can be said in another--becomes invalid and in fact impossible because different languages express understandings of substantially different realities. This has remarkable implications for the assumption that English was at the very least a suitable and equal replacement for all Indian languages.

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[7]Ibid., 139.

Rejection of the intertranslatability postulate is a position not accepted by all linguists, including some as respected and influential as Edward Sapir. However, the point to be made here regards the fundamental agreement between the *reality-construction* and *mapping* theories that different languages do represent at least marginally different realities. Therefore some concepts of reality may be exclusive or central to a particular language system and not to others, and these peculiar concepts may not be able to be easily, fully, or even adequately expressed through other languages. Moreover, the attempted prohibition of a language in favor of the imposition of another will have dramatic influence upon especially those concepts--expressed, reflected, and understood through language--specific to a particular culture. Examples of such cultural traits will be examined below.

Theories explaining reality as do Grace's are neither as new nor as radical as they might initially seem. In his *Republic*, Plato constructed the striking allegory of the cave--in which people take reality to be shadows cast upon a cave wall--to illustrate his ideas of the human relationship to reality:

"It is a strange picture," said Glaucon. "And a strange sort of prisoners."

"Like ourselves," Socrates replied.[8]

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[8]Plato, *The Republic of Plato,* translated with an introduction and notes by Francis MacDonald Cornford, 228-229.

Similarly, Willard Van Orman Quine, the eminent twentieth century philosopher, expressed his skepticism regarding the human capacity to experience reality accurately in the pithy epigram: "There is many a slip betwixt objective cup and subjective lip."[9]

Further pursuit of these philosophical discussions does begin to lead down a tangential and arcane path distant from the direct considerations of this examination. But taken as they stand and in conjunction with the complementary *reality-construction model* presented by Grace, such theories involve dramatic implications for attempting to impose a new language upon a people. Beyond a mere reorganization of vocabulary and grammar, forcing a different language on a culture of an entirely distinct language stock will have a profoundly mutative effect upon that culture itself. Furthermore, the *prohibition* of a native language coinciding with the imposition of a foreign language--precisely the program advocated by Indian policy reformers craving "complete" assimilation--represents an especially willful and encompassing attack on a culture's language, on the culture itself, and therefore on that culture's vision of reality and its world.

On a less abstract level, ethnological evidence abounds supporting theories of linguistic relativism and the crucial role played by language in shaping and reflecting culture. First, most Indian cultures at the time of the focused

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[9]Willard Van Orman Quine, *Methods of Logic,* xii.

assimilationist impulse were non-literate, meaning education and socialization were conducted largely through the spoken word. "Traditional Indians were exposed to a complex system of education, one which involved all aspects of their existence and for the duration of their lives. This folk-educational process was transmitted verbally and passed on from generation to generation."[10] In transmitting culture verbally, it was the spoken word that held the concepts and understanding to be conveyed. Furthermore, for traditional Indian cultures it is as Witherspoon asserted regarding the Navajo: there exists an "unbreakable connection between mind and matter, *speech* and event."[11] This is not to argue that the importance of language declines with literacy, but to show the importance to Indian cultures of language as they knew it and practiced it--verbally.

Other evidence demonstrates further the particular significance of language to Indian cultures. The Apache, for example, did not exhibit as rigid a kinship system as some tribes: "Not only were formal clan ties lacking, there were no tribal chiefs, councils, or any other political unit among these people. What held them together was a common language, customs and rituals."[12] Language, to the Apache, represented

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[10]French, *Psychocultural Change,* 44.

[11]Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe,* 9, emphasis added.

[12]French, *Psychocultural Change,* 70.

an integral component of culture and identity.

In recounting his experiences at an Indian school, Francis LaFlesche offered a personal and intriguing perspective regarding the importance of his native language and the efforts to dissuade him from using it. "[N]o native American can ever cease to regret that the utterances of his father have been constantly belittled when put into English, that their thoughts have frequently been travestied and their native dignity obscured." Furthermore, LaFlesche contended that "the beauty and picturesqueness, and euphonious playfulness, or the gravity of diction which I have heard among my own people, and other tribes as well, are all but impossible to be given literally in English."[13] These statements present a clear and practical, not theoretical, rejection of the intertranslatability postulate. In some regards, LaFlesche's assertions render high-brow hypothesizing on the validity of intertranslatability almost ludicrous: through direct experience, LaFlesche was both aware and adamant in his opinion that English failed as a substitute for the Omaha language. Moreover, LaFlesche's sentiments vividly illustrate not only his reverence for his native tongue, but also his preference for its expressive capacities. LaFlesche's assessment of English in relation to Omaha is especially interesting in light of the fact that he not only excelled as a student in an Indian school, but also went on to write a rather fond

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[13]Francis LaFlesche, *The Middle Five,* xix.

autobiographical account--in English--of his experiences. In undertaking white education, Francis LaFlesche proved himself one of the most receptive and successful Indian students of his time. Yet writing his memoirs, years after his experiences in school, LaFlesche still asserted the value and virtue of the Omaha language--in direct comparison to English. Such evidence sheds an unflattering light upon reformers' claims of the superiority of English and the benevolence of imposing it upon Indian students.

That language is culturally-specific is a fact especially illustrated by Boas's discussion of the complexity and the markedly distinct (from each other as well as from English) character of Indian languages:

> The category of gender is rare . . . ideas--such as visibility, or position in regard to the speaker in the six principal directions (up, down, right, left, front, back), or tense--are added to the concept of the demonstrative pronouns . . . In the verb the category of tense may be almost suppressed or may be exuberantly developed. Modes may include many ideas that we express by means of adverbs, or they may be absent. The distinction between verb and noun may be different from ours . . . it is characteristic of many American languages that verbal ideas are expressed by different stems according to the form of the object to which the verb predicates. This feature occurs particularly in verbs of existence and of motion, so that existence or motion of round, long, flat, etc., objects, are differentiated.[14]

Though Boas's examination becomes somewhat esoteric, the gist remains clear: Indian languages are extremely diverse and

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[14]Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture,* 207; 214-215.

quite dissimilar to European languages, and in these differences is reflected and created a substantially distinct psychology and understanding of the world.

Specific examples of these distinctions between European and Indian languages are bountiful and highly revealing, each language trait disclosing something particular about the culture it helps compose. For instance, the Kwakiutl engage their world through a language which exhibits a strong propensity for metaphorical expressions of an artful and decidedly euphemistic flavor.[15] Such an example illustrates something intriguing of the nature of the Kwakiutl world itself. Similarly, former Hampton Institute student Thomas Wildcat Alford's descriptions of his native Shawnee language speak of remarkable differences between Shawnee and white culture. In his autobiography, Alford stated that in the Shawnee language, "men and women are spoken of as of the same gender" and "personal pronouns are neither masculine nor feminine."[16]

An aspect of the Hopi language particularly demonstrates the magnitude of the bond between language and culture and even existence itself. Hopi expressions always involve notions of space and time; therefore there are no verb tenses in the Hopi language.[17] This linguistic trait reflects and,

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[15]ibid., 232*ff*.

[16]Thomas Wildcat Alford, *Civilization*, 19.

[17]Whorf, *Language,* 65*ff*.

indeed, creates, some remarkable aspects of the Hopi world view. In Hopi reality, time is understood as a drastically different concept than in the Western European tradition. In fact, using the term "time" is substantially misleading when referring to the Hopi awareness of things getting later, for the word and the concepts behind it are bound by cultural constructs that obscure and fail to approximate what to the Hopi is an understanding of "time." Time cannot be objectified or quantified in the Hopi world view; it is not a succession of different days, but the successive return of the *same* day. Everything that has occurred and will occur is a part of the Hopi present. Thus the ramifications for preparing for the future and dealing with the past in the Hopi world are as fascinating as they are demonstrative of an approach to existence quite different from that of the European tradition. And these dramatic distinctions from European/Euro-American world views must be understood as inseparable from the Hopi language.

That such linguistically based cultural traits cannot be taken lightly is illustrated further by the degree to which language is absolutely central to Navajo concepts of the existence and maintenance of the world. Witherspoon argued that "it is through language that the world of the Navajo was created, and it is through language that the Navajos control, classify, and beautify their world."[18] To illustrate more

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[18]Witherspoon, *Navajo Universe,* 7.

explicitly the significance of language to the world of the Navajo, Witherspoon pointed out that the Navajo believe that "the form of the world was first conceived in thought, and then this form was projected onto primordial unordered substance through the compulsive power of speech and song."[19] In the Navajo belief system, language created the world itself.

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[19]Ibid., 47.

VI. AN AMERICAN EXCHANGE: EVIDENCE AGAINST THE NECESSITY OF IMPOSITION AND PROHIBITION

That language represents a precious and crucial component of culture is undeniable in light of the evidence presented above; to foist another language upon a culture has dramatic effects upon that culture.[1] To attempt to *deprive* a culture of its native tongue, though, is an endeavor of an even more insidious nature, and the negative ramifications increase exponentially. In contemplating these ramifications, Grace did not shy from expressing his fullest apprehension: "The prospect of the present linguistic diversity in the world being submerged by a single juggernaut of a language (say English) is at least as disturbing as the prospect of the extinction of biological species."[2] Furthermore, when one acknowledges the essential relationship between language and culture; when prejudices toward Indian languages are properly

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[1]A nod of recognition is due regarding the title of this chapter, for it involves an allusion to Alfred W. Crosby's fascinating *The Columbian Exchange* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972).

[2]Grace, *Construction,* 11.

seen in the light of racism and ethnocentrism; and when extermination of Indian languages (and not merely education in a second language) is recognized as a central concern of language policy, then the educational program proposed steps darkly into the realm of morality. Offered in the name of benevolence, United States language policy reflected ulterior motives of malevolent intent: the annihilation of Indian cultures through the replacement of Indian languages was the desired end.

It is only fair to state that the ideas held in the language theories of those such as Franz Boas were certainly not explicitly understood in all of their theoretical and practical profundity by Indian policy reformers: linguistics as a modern discipline did not come into to its own until the 1880s when, according to such a leading practitioner as Boas, the study of languages moved more fully beyond compilations of grammar and vocabulary to the more intensive examinations of epistemology and morphology that enabled the later work of such linguists as Whorf and Grace. However, it is equally fair and necessary to point out that the substantial language differences that separated Indians from white Americans were easily recognized. This is the critical issue. For even if Whorfian hypotheses or Gracian forebodings had been accessible in the late nineteenth century, Indian policy reformers very likely would have adopted a policy of paternally-minded, "benign neglect" toward theories of linguistic relativism and

the importance of language to culture. The intent of reformers never involved concern for the preservation and protection of Indian cultures, but only the spread of white American culture and the suppression of all others. Indian languages were not the language of white Americans, and therefore they were to be obliterated.[3]

Yet ironies exist. Not only did white Americans comprehend the vast differences in language (and therefore culture) between themselves and Indians, but they also understood to some degree the extent to which Indian languages had profoundly influenced the English language. Full acknowledgement and acceptance of these contributions could not have prevented forced and exclusive education in English, for adopting the majority language is deemed by many even today as an obligation of citizenship and is arguably beneficial in some regards. Yet recognition of the positive exchange between English and Indian languages should have played some role in asserting the value of Indian languages and resisting the wholesale denigration, rejection, and replacement of those

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[3]Notions of encouraging cultural diversity were immeasurably distant from the thoughts of most white Americans in the late nineteenth century. Instead, a firm belief in the absolute superiority--morally as well as aesthetically and intellectually--of white American culture defined the era. In *The End of American Innocence,* Henry May argues that Americans held to this encompassing idea of superiority with unity and utter conviction, and that it was not until a profound cultural revolution in the first decades of the twentieth century that the persistent confidence and complacency of the nineteenth century were shattered. In such a climate, tolerance of the cultural alternatives represented by American Indian languages stood little chance.

languages that the policies of imposition and prohibition represented.

First of all, it must be understood that languages constantly change: the evolution of language is an axiom of linguistics, and the character and impetus of this change is as diverse as languages themselves.[4] Boas argued that even before European contact Indian languages underwent substantial revisions as a result of interchange between tribes, changing cultural foundations that found expression in language, refining of expression, etc. He even considered the possibility of a natural hybridization of languages.[5] Following European-Indian contact, the evolution of the respective languages continued, perhaps now more dramatically, now more rapidly, and now involving the not unnatural component of exchange between cultures of different continents and dramatically distinct world views. Boas saw nothing aberrant or inherently deleterious in such an exchange, for he accepted the fact that "as soon as two groups come into close contact their cultural traits will be disseminated from one to the other."[6]

The evidence of cultural exchange is substantial, with the extensive adoption into English of aspects of Indian languages having a particular significance for this

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[4]Boas, *Race,* 253.

[5]Ibid., 220.

[6]Ibid., 251.

examination. When Europeans found themselves in the strange new world of the Americas, the animals, plants, weather, topography, etc., that they had never before encountered often retained Indian appellations when incorporated into European languages. Raccoon, puma, hickory, yucca, avocado, maize, blizzard, hurricane, bayou, savanna, and podunk all originated in Indian languages and found their way into English. Today a majority of American states and Canadian provinces are known by names of Indian etymology.[7]

Even more abstract concepts were assimilated into the English language and its corresponding culture. Weatherford argued that since making decisions by consensus was not a trait especially familiar to sixteenth and seventeenth century European cultures, Europeans in the Americas adopted the Algonquian term *caucus* to identify and explain to themselves what was a rather foreign process. Similarly, because Europeans had no cultural equivalent, they appropriated the term *potlatch* to identify the "ritualized giving away of presents" common to Northwest tribes.[8] All told, Weatherford estimated that approximately two hundred words of Indian origin have become relatively common in the English language. If terms of a less common variety--for example, specialized

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[7]See Jack Weatherford, *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America*; George Philip Krapp, *The English Language in America*; and John Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins*.

[8]Weatherford, *Native Roots,* 203. Weatherford's etymology for the term "caucus" is corroborated by Ayto, *Dictionary*.

words such as those of science--are included, Weatherford counts as many as 2,200 Indian words "taken directly" into the English language.[9]

The significance of this exchange for European existence in the western hemisphere should not be belittled. On the one hand, the endurance of Indian terms adopted into English attests to their effectiveness; they are as much an integral part of the English language as are linguistic components adopted from "Old World" languages. Beyond this, however, stands the idea that Indian words in fact assisted Europeans to survive and become Americans. The immigrants to this continent received a profound gift from the native peoples they found waiting on American shores: by assimilating Indian words and the concepts they conveyed, Europeans took a dramatic leap from seeing this world as strangers to seeing it--at least somewhat--as did those people who had lived here for ages. As Weatherford put it, "Indian terms formed the linguistic map of the new territory."[10] Europeans survived in this strange new world as much by the grace of Indian words that explained a country to which they were not accustomed as by the grace of the food and assistance that similarly enabled a survival beyond the limiting factors of European inexperience and ignorance. Though the gifts of physical nourishment are still celebrated by Americans at Thanksgiving each

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[9]Weatherford, *Native Roots,* 204.

[10]Ibid., 199.

November, the gifts of linguistic nourishment were apparently forgotten by United States Indian policy reformers by the 1880s.

Not only do all anglophones possess a substantially Indian linguistic heritage, but some influential thinkers have gone to great lengths to emphasize the virtues of Indian languages, the Indian use of language, and the capacity of Indians to learn English. In the seminal *Lectures on American Literature*, Samuel Knapp wore his personal agenda on his sleeve, proudly asserting the value and validity of early American letters. To this end, Knapp unabashedly glorified the contributions made by Indians, lauding the eloquence of such renowned Indian orators as Tecumseh and, quite notably, commending Indian advances in English.[11] Not only did Knapp shower approbation upon, in particular, Sequoia for his development of the Cherokee syllabary, but he also declared "that the Indians themselves are becoming philologists and grammarians, and exciting the wonder of the world."[12] Furthermore, Knapp contended that as early as the first decades

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[11]Samuel L. Knapp, *Lectures on American Literature*. Regarding Indian oratory, Knapp argues that "the sons of the forest are as fond of [eloquence] as the best cultivated minds in polished life," and that Indians are in fact capable of "high attainments in the noble art," 210. In a somewhat muddled presentation, Knapp also alludes to English language dabbling in Indian languages, drawing a parallel between the ancient adoption of Roman words and characters into the Briton language and the contemporary English approach to Indian languages, 11.

[12]Knapp, *Lectures*, 25.

of the eighteenth century, Indians were successfully cultivating knowledge of English. He pointed out that by 1829 the Cherokee possessed a bilingual newspaper "characterized by decency and good sense; and thus many of the Cherokee are able to read both languages."[13] The fact that these Indians willingly learned English--without being coerced to do so and without having their native language prohibited--should not go unnoticed.

Knapp's analysis possesses its shortcomings, including a peculiar discussion of the impact of climate upon the aesthetic appeal of different languages. Vitiated also by racist and ethnocentric evaluations and by his assumption that "the Indians are fated to fade away before the progress of civilization; it was so written in the destiny of nations," Knapp's examination nonetheless stands as a significant counterpoint to the rationalizations of language imposition and prohibition that would flourish decades later.[14] In fact, Knapp's prejudiced opinions make his praise for Indians and their use of language all the more remarkable. Despite his personal and

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[13]Ibid., 29.

[14]Knapp, *Lectures*, 48. In regards to climate, Knapp contends that warmer temperatures made Italian and French more melodic and harmonic languages than their northern counterparts. However, he asserts that the same climatic influences had an almost pathological effect upon West Indian languages, reducing them to "infantile imbecility," 10. Knapp permits his ethnocentrism--or perhaps racism--to surface again in referring to Wampanoag leader King Philip in oxymoronic terms as "a *savage* of the first order of intellect," 229. (Emphasis added.)

cultural biases, he offered conspicuous evidence and argumentation in direct contradiction to the ethnocentric criticisms that would fuel the assimilationist attack on American Indian languages.

Indian languages and linguistic abilities attracted praiseful and prominent attention from other influential representatives of intellectual American culture. As preeminent a man of American letters as Walt Whitman exclaimed jubilantly his support for Indian languages: "What is the fitness--What the strange charm of aboriginal names? . . . All aboriginal names sound good . . . They are honest words--they give the true length, breadth, depth. They all fit. Mississippi!--The word winds with chutes--it rolls a stream three thousand miles long."[15] Whitman went as far as declaring that Indian names should be substituted for such European titles as those of the St. Lawrence River and the "great cities" of St. Louis and New Orleans.[16] Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the larval anthropologist and later budding racist, advocated the instruction of Indian languages in American colleges.[17] And the eloquence of one Indian in particular, Logan, a Cayuga

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[15]Walt Whitman, *An American Primer,* 30, 18.

[16]Ibid., 32. Whitman, as Knapp, has a particular agenda: "The great proper names used in America must commemorate things belonging to America and dating thence.--Because what is America for?--To commemorate the old myths and the gods?--To repeat the Mediterranean here? Or the uses and growths of Europe here?--No...but to destroy all those from the purposes of the earth, and to erect a new earth in their place."

[17]Weatherford, *Roots,* 256.

chief, received the broad sanction of American educators, his words once gracing schoolbooks.[18]

Relating to Indian proficiency in learning English--a dramatic point when considering that the prohibition of Indian languages was ostensibly presented as a compensatory measure meant to eliminate hindrances upon the Indians' supposedly weak capacity to learn English--one finds a rather interesting perspective from the literary world. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, a novel by the very popular writer James Fenimore Cooper, even the brutal Indian villain Magua speaks in articulate and eloquent English. Furthermore, Magua understands the most formal speech of his English foes; in conversations with the daughter of his arch enemy, esoteric words such as "palliating" give Magua no pause.[19]

Two points require notice here. First, it should be recognized that Magua represents an Indian who learned the English language successfully without relinquishing his native tongue. Second, Magua is a fictional character. Precisely and solely because of this existence as a creative composition one might tend toward discounting any influences (represented by the first point above) that Magua's English capabilities might have had upon the mind-set of those effecting language policy. However, the power of popular culture--even fictionalized reality--has had a profound influence upon American

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[18]Eastman, *Pratt*, 13.

[19]James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans,* 141.

perceptions of reality. Rarely have whites understood and related to Indian people according to the realities of Indian existence. Instead, as Robert F. Berkhofer argued in *The White Man's Indian*, white images of Indians have been shaped almost exclusively by white preconceptions and stereotypes. Such preconceptions and stereotypes have been drawn substantially from the realm of the make-believe. One need look no further than such distorted representations as Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows to appreciate the extent to which the Pretend shaped American visions of reality. Largely as a result of Cody's traveling shows, Americans came to picture all Indians according to a single image--that of horse-riding, braided-hair, feather-wearing warriors--an image that held true for only a very small minority of traditional Indian cultures. One is led therefore to wonder why, if fictionalized popular culture played such a significant role in shaping white conceptions of Indians, reformers felt compelled to prohibit Indian languages in the interest of promoting the successful indoctrination of English; there existed obvious and potentially influential examples such as Cooper's of Indians who learned English well as a complement to their first language.

Another interesting perspective on the Indian capacity to learn English is offered by George Philip Krapp in his 1925 examination of the English language in America. Writing a decade before the Indian New Deal would finally back the

government away from the prohibition of Indian languages and recommend a bilingual approach to education, a determined Krapp hedged no bets in arguing with one blanket statement that "Indians who learned English learned it so well that comparatively little Indian color was left in their spoken English."[20] This statement is wonderfully problematic for such a terse assertion. First of all, it directly contradicts both factual evidence and Krapp's arguments themselves. Anyone who has ever spoken with a American Indian to whom English is a language second to an Indian tongue will attest to the fact that there exists a decidedly unique accent. Krapp himself demonstrated this in arguing that some Indian languages and their pronunciation traits lead to the substitution of the sound "L" in place of "R" in English words.

Yet Krapp still asserted that Indians learned English so thoroughly that no identifiable Indian dialect remains. Perhaps this is a result of the diversity of Indian languages themselves: Krapp found no consistent, single Indian dialect because, for example, in speaking English, a Navajo will demonstrate a markedly different world view, syncretic vocabulary, syntax, accent, etc., than a native speaker of Lakota or a native speaker of Kwakiutl. More likely, Krapp's conclusions were products of his personal prejudices. He criticized many Indians as being content to speak a "crude and childish English"; in his estimation, imperfect English

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[20]Krapp, *English,* 267.

demonstrates laziness, not the persistence of linguistic traits which constitute existence of a dialect. Krapp also argued that Indians resisted learning English because of a prideful fear of making mistakes.[21] Such a perspective not only neglects Indian devotion to their languages, but also misses the extent to which resistance to learning English represented defiant cultural assertion in the face of white assimilation efforts. Furthermore, perhaps Krapp's assertion reflected a particular agenda: his declaration of Indians' success in learning English may have been a veiled affirmation of the desirability of assimilation and an expression of confidence in its potential for success. Ultimately, Krapp's evaluation possesses significance for this examination, for it represents a respected, learned scholar of the English language publicly and formally asserting that, in his opinion, Indians learn English remarkably well.

When taken together, the opinions of those from Knapp to Krapp regarding American Indian languages, linguistic abilities, and capacities to learn English present intellectual and moral bookends upon the assimilationist era. By hemming in the period in which reformers zealously called for the complete assimilation of Indians through education, the imposition of the English language and the demand for the prohibition of Indian languages become far less excusable. Despite any understanding of the influence and positive

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[21]Ibid.

contributions of Indian languages to English, despite whatever glorifications of Indian oratory and acknowledgements of Indian linguistic capacities, and despite any incipient comprehension of the ideas of linguistic relativity, reformers settled resolutely upon the idea of not only forcing English upon Indians, but also prohibiting any use of Indian languages.

There were alternatives. First, the sovereignty of Indians could have been respected; Indians might have been allowed to define their own educational and cultural programs under a policy of self-determination. But in an era marked by intense Indian-white hostility, by the strong pressures of anti-Indian white self-interest, and by the absolute confidence whites held in the value of their own culture, such magnanimity remained both highly unlikely and decidedly untenable. Second, a multicultural approach could have been developed which supported and celebrated traditional Indian languages and cultures at the same time that the English language (and corresponding white American culture) was introduced, perhaps even involving some degree of coercion. Yet even a policy such as this was too radical and therefore unacceptable to most reformers.

A third sort of program, equally dismissed yet perhaps the most innocuous for it was already being pursued (if only as an incidental result of some of the more natural tendencies of intercultural contact), was the combination of segregation,

assimilation, accommodation, and cultural assertion demonstrated by the Five Civilized Tribes of the Indian Territory.[22] Though not organized into a formal program of Indian-white relations, the example of these nations offers insight into the reality of what the public and policy makers defined as the "Indian Problem."

In the midst of the clamor for Indian assimilation and the persistent assertions of the necessity of forcing white culture upon Indians, the Civilized Tribes had already submitted to various white demands and had been busily adopting many aspects of white culture--while at the same time determinedly preserving aspects of their traditional cultures.[23] Not only had these nations relocated to the Indian Territory to appease white interests, there they continued to practice a variety of white American cultural traits. By 1833, the Choctaw had built twelve school houses in the Indian Territory. By 1877, the Cherokee had seventy-five schools. Between 1838 and 1865, the Five Civilized Tribes had built a comprehensive system of schools--including two Negro schools--with the majority of teachers being themselves Indians from

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[22]The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole nations comprised what became collectively known as the Five Civilized Tribes.

[23]In *The Roots of Dependency,* Richard White argues that, prior to removal to the Indian Territory in the 1830s, the Choctaw had in fact "embarked on a process of planned acculturation" as the means to cope with the dramatic changes wrought upon their world by interaction with Europeans, 1.

the community.[24] The Cherokee Nation had even patterned its constitution after that of the United States. Indeed the most heinous aspects of white culture were embraced: the holding of black slaves was a practice common to the Civilized Tribes.

The Civilized Tribes also assimilated explicitly linguistic aspects of white culture. Following Sequoia's development of the Cherokee syllabary, the nation established two bilingual newspapers, *The Phoenix* (1828) and *The Advocate* (1844). The Bible was translated into the Cherokee syllabary so that the white man's religion could be learned more effectively, now in Cherokee as well as English.[25] Yet these adoptions of white culture were not enough to persuade reformers that a more lenient and culturally tolerant policy toward Indian languages was plausible and--in light of the evidence--viable. Instead, Indian education plowed ahead according to a single guiding vision: complete assimilation through the exclusive imposition of English. The rejection of even the example set by the relatively accommodative Five Civilized Tribes reveals that the ultimate objective behind the language policy was not the cultivation of the common ground of the English language.

Ironically, even the best intentions behind the language program were misguided. Reformers believed that ridding

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[24]French, *Psychocultural Change,* 136, 157.

[25]As the culmination of the Civilized Tribes' particular combination of assimilation, segregation, and cultural preservation, the Cherokee nation proposed the creation of a distinct Indian state--Sequoia--to be admitted to the Union.

Indians of their native languages would benefit the Indians themselves by uplifting them toward the level of white civilization. Yet such notions were founded upon fallacious evaluations of languages. First of all, the complexity, diversity, and sophistication of Indian languages was dismissed. Reformers monotonously invoked such erroneous pejoratives as "crude" and "savage" and "inferior" when referring to Indian languages. The assumption was that the English language--the complement to the technologically advanced white American culture--was a superior form of verbal and literary expression. However, such cultural vainglory proves unfounded. Whorf contended that in actuality, "many preliterate ("primitive") communities, far from being subrational, may show the human mind functioning on a higher and more complex plane of rationality than among civilized men."[26] Furthermore, in examining specifically the Hopi language, Whorf reached a striking conclusion concerning the relation of sensation to resulting consciousness: "Does the Hopi language show here a higher plane of thinking, a more rational analysis of situations, than our vaunted English? Of course it does. In this field and in various others, English compared to Hopi is like a bludgeon compared to a rapier."[27] In spite of reformers' convictions to the contrary, the English language did not represent a superior form of communication. Thus the

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[26]Whorf, *Language,* 81.

[27]Ibid., 85.

language program, intended as an expression of benevolence, was instead an expression replete with the errors and injustices intrinsic to ethnocentrism.

This ethnocentrism combined with a steadfast adherence to the notion of a linear progression of societies along a cultural continuum--a common belief of the late nineteenth century soundly trashed by succeeding generations of anthropologists--to lead reformers to truly and mistakenly believe that they bestowed upon Indians the priceless gift of a few jumps up the cultural ladder.[28] In indicting such thinking and its impact on linguistic theories, Whorf offered a statement ripe with implications for the government's language policies:

> The evolutionary concept, having been dumped upon modern man while his notions of language and thought were based on knowledge of only a few types out of the hundreds of very diverse linguistic types existing, has abetted his provincial linguistic prejudices and fostered the grandiose hokum that his type of thinking and the few European tongues on which it is based represent the culmination and flower of the evolution of language![29]

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[28]The hierarchical arrangement of races was central to the nineteenth century mind-set. See Gould, *Mismeasure,* 31. Since culture was typically attributed to biology, or at least to the same factors--such as environment--that determined racial traits, culture and race were indistinguishable. Thus racial ranking was cultural ranking, and the racial hierarchy implied a corresponding cultural hierarchy. Furthermore, that races develop along a cultural continuum was an abiding component of the entire hierarchical context. See Bieder, *Science,* 13. Eventually, anthropologists such as Boas rejected concepts of social/cultural progress. See Boas, *Race,* 254.

[29]Whorf, *Language,* 84.

Those concerned with Indian education had not only based their attitudes and policies toward Indian languages upon an ignorance of and a disregard for the importance of language to culture; upon neglect of and hypocrisy toward the value of Indian languages (as evident even to the reformers in the contributions made to English); and upon indifference to the evidence of prior and contemporary Indian assimilation of the English language; but also upon misguided assumptions regarding cultural relativism and cultural development.

VII. MECHANISMS OF OPPRESSION: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE RESTRICTION

The timing and the zealous undertaking of language imposition and prohibition represented no aberration in overall United States policy. In fact, reformers unleashed at the same time the same assimilationist fervor and methods versus such other supposedly insufficiently-American groups as immigrants, southern blacks, and the lower classes. None other than Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan made this connection to Indian policy explicit, arguing that the "benevolent institutions"--that is, schools--which were accessible to "foreigners," "the negroes of the South," and "the poor man's child" should be extended to Indians to "do for them what they are so successfully doing for all the other races in this country--assimilate them."[1] Similarly, in the appeal to Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz that would ultimately result in the establishment of the prototypical Carlisle Indian School, Richard Henry Pratt, the other

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[1]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 7, 5.

patriarch of nineteenth century Indian education, alluded to Schurz's experience as an immigrant to the United States and thereby equated immigrants and American Indians: "The Indians need the chances of participation you have had and they will just as easily become useful citizens."[2] And in addressing the 1891 Mohonk Conference, Pratt reiterated that he had ever "urged foreign emigrant privileges for (Indians).[3]

Despite some similarities, Indians must be recognized as distinct from all the other groups targeted by assimilationist policy. First, Indians, unlike immigrants to the United States, did not conduct relations with white Americans based on an initial decision to separate themselves from their own culture to live in another. Ohannessian identified this realization as critical to comprehending the difficulties of teaching English to Indians.[4] Second, the circumstances of southern blacks and American Indians are not identical. Most southern blacks who had come to the United States by the late nineteenth century certainly did not immigrate of their own volition. Yet the situation of blacks was decidedly different from that of Indians in that it was one of marked separation

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[2]Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904,* edited by Robert M. Utley, 215-16.

[3]*Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian* (1891), 60-67, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 273.

[4]Sirarpi Ohannessian, *The Study of the Problems of Teaching English to American Indians: Report and Recommendations,* 11.

from both the home of their culture and the direct support of the millions who practiced it there. Furthermore, blacks, since even their earliest experience in what would become the United States, mostly lived in proximity to large numbers of whites and were thereby significantly exposed to and involved in white American culture. The English language was already a integral component of black culture by the late nineteenth century. Although blacks did struggle to and succeed in preserving and maintaining many aspects of African culture, their particular circumstances necessarily entailed a struggle of different character from that of American Indians. Finally, while a profoundly disproportionate number of American Indians have historically lived in conditions of poverty in the United States, one cannot--for the same reasons that Indians must be distinguished from immigrants and blacks--equate their situation with that of poor whites. Although poverty itself to some extent implies a distinct culture, even poorer Indians were still dramatically culturally distinguished from other Americans of similarly oppressed economic status. Indian cultures and histories combined to create distinct and particular responses to the assimilationist efforts regarding language.

Despite marked differences, however, all of these groups were targeted by the same scheme of public education. In the mid-nineteenth century, education itself had undergone a critical metamorphosis, and the 1840s and 1850s saw the

groundwork laid for a broad system of public instruction.[5] Influenced by the ideas of Horace Mann and Adam Smith (and in fact personally led by Mann), the Massachusetts Board of Education designed the prototype for public education. This Massachusetts model utilized standardized curriculum and centralized authority as tools of social control, tools designed to cope with such rapid changes in the American social landscape as the waves of immigration and the shift toward industrialization with its attendant poverty and crime. With the traditional methods of social control practiced in formerly small, tight-knit communities breaking down as Americans urbanized and atomized, public education and its emphasis on the internalization of abstract concepts of control--conformity, hard work, the equation that acceptance of the system equals success--became a preferred method of imposing restraint. Such developments would have profound implications for Indian education, for this pattern of dealing with social problems--upper levels of American society imposing their standards of culture and morality as a means of preserving and protecting the status quo by which they benefitted--would be influential and enduring. "This was the first major reform in United States education and it set the pattern for school expansion for the next two generations."[6]

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[5]This discussion of the development of public education draws especially upon Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools*.

[6]Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, 235.

Thus the assimilationist program of Indian education undertaken in the latter third of the nineteenth century finds its true heritage in a program of conscious oppression.

This scheme of public education was widely embraced. Though an array of problems hindered implementation, even the South and the western territories adopted its philosophies.[7] In the South, for instance, "a single pervasive institution, the public school, was the lever" expected to "move the region, to solve all of the other complex problems arising from southern poverty, ignorance and racial tension."[8] Yet such hopes, as demonstrated above, ultimately rested upon ulterior motives of social control. While public education granted new opportunities to blacks, women, the poor, and other groups--including Indians--largely neglected by earlier educational structures, such opportunities also reflected the extension and solidification of oppression. Allegedly devised to confer upon American Indians the positive aspects intrinsic to white schooling, the late nineteenth century program of Indian education also involved decidedly malevolent intent.

That language would be an integral component of an education program intended to oppress minority groups in the United States also represents no aberrant methods. In *Discourse and Discrimination*, Smitherman-Donaldson and van

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[7]French, *Psychocultural Change*, 27.

[8]Louis R. Harlan, *Separate but Unequal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), as cited in Carnoy, *Education,* 291.

Dijk argued that racism is conveyed through language, and that the power of the dominant majority is both expressed and maintained through this racist manipulation of language. They referred specifically to such racist manifestations of language as biased reporting, prejudiced choice of words, and negative connotation labels--racism as it is explicitly or implicitly expressed in discourse. But the implications must be taken further: language is at once an integral part of racism, of maintaining a power status quo, of institutionalizing racism. This goes beyond merely discourse to include as well how one group's use of language may be circumscribed by another group as a means of imposing, expressing, and maintaining power. The prohibition of Indian languages is as much a linguistically related expression of power and the desire to control as is the discourse-based denigration of black English.

Smitherman-Donaldson and van Dijk explained the key to a racist expression of power through language thusly: "For one group to exert power over another, it must reproduce the conditions that allow it to maintain control."[9] They also argued that "the discursive reproduction of racism is the enactment or legitimation of white majority power at the micro levels of everyday verbal interaction and communication."[10]

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[9]Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson and Teun A. van Dijk, eds., *Discourse and Discrimination*, 16.

[10]Ibid., 17.

Again, in discussing the use of language to reinforce the self-righteousness of the perpetrating group and to rationalize, justify, or express desire for the oppression of other groups, they referred specifically to racist *discourse*. (And, interestingly, they referred only to majority over minority racist discourse, neglecting to discuss how minorities can similarly manipulate language as racist expressions of or toward power.)[11] But such notions regarding the manipulation of language should again be extended beyond discourse to include such expressions of power as the government's Indian policy of language imposition and prohibition. By attempting to eliminate the cultural alternative represented by Indian languages and, at the very least, to impose English--the language that would best inculcate the ideals, rules, and structure of the American status quo--such a policy intends to reproduce at the most basic levels of "verbal interaction and communication" the conditions that allow the empowered group to maintain control.

Furthermore, what qualifies as knowledge and education in a particular society is primarily defined by the dominant group, and the instruction meant to indoctrinate this knowledge in other groups is carried out by means of the dominant language and through the educational program mandated by the

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[11]Smitherman-Donaldson and van Dijk do state that their study analyzes only discrimination "against minority groups," 22. However, Smitherman-Donaldson later contends that in fact blacks cannot be racist because they do not wield power in the relationship between blacks and whites, 146-47.

group that speaks it. Of course both the language and the education program reflect (and attempt to instill) the dominant group's beliefs and concepts--even those tainted by racism. Complementary to the dominant group's imposition of a prejudiced education is its insistence that minority/non-dominant group intelligence (and cultural manifestations of that intelligence) is inferior, though the dominant group's biases skew the evaluation away from any objective standard. As Smitherman-Donaldson explained in discussing white attitudes toward black English, this process has entrenched racism in the American consciousness and "generally reaffirmed the perspective that the problem is not racism but the victims of racism and their failure to conform to the Anglo ideal."[12] Pursuing this "illogic of racism" had profound ramifications for United States Indian education policy: forced conformity to the white ideal--through the complete substitution of English in place of Indian languages--was precisely the remedy prescribed to rectify the Indian Problem.[13]

Both the policy makers who shaped the intolerant language program and those prominent thinkers who offered up theories of a social hierarchy to justify that system expressed prejudice toward Indians with no pretense of subtlety or

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[12]Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson, "Discriminatory Discourse on Afro-American Speech," in Smitherman-Donaldson and van Dijk, *Discourse and Discrimination*, 146.

[13]The "illogic of racism" is a term drawn from Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*.

emotional detachment. However, they endeavored to give their virulent racism and its attendant attempt to subordinate Indians the imprimatur of formal education and the sheen of respectability and legitimacy it afforded.

Education itself is, however, neither a neutral nor benign institution. Yet that policy makers couched their arguments for imposing white education upon American Indians in terms of philanthropy is entirely consistent, for "the 'traditional' theory of schooling is based on the widely held view that Western education brings people out of their ignorance and underdevelopment into a condition of enlightenment and understanding." Closer to the truth in practice, however, "Western formal education came to most countries as part of imperialist domination." In *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, Martin Carnoy argued that Western education performs a definite function in socializing members of a society into the power-holding elites' version of the status quo: "schools transfer culture and values and they channel children into various social roles. They maintain social order." Carnoy stated this concept even more explicitly, arguing that in the United States, schools have been "used to ensure, as much as possible and apparently with some success, that those in the worst economic positions do not rebel against the system which oppresses them."[14] While Carnoy's propensity for economic explanations colors his perception of

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[14]Carnoy, *Education,* 4, 3, 8, 18.

the particular aims of education, his take on the oppressive intent behind education holds true. Yet the intent should be extended to include cultural, social, and political oppression as well: education represented the means to force upon Indians all aspects of white American culture and thereby preserve the white-dominated status quo.

What resulted in the case of Indian education was a program engineered to operate as a machine of internal colonization. Carnoy asserted that "the colonial element in schooling is its attempt to silence, to rationalize the irrational, and to gain acceptance for structures which are oppressive." Furthermore, he argued that educational colonization relates to relationships between classes, races, and even genders--not exclusively between nations. Finally, Carnoy contended that in using education as a mechanism of oppression, "primary schools stress socialization into European language, values and norms (Christianity), and the degradation of all that is native." The attack on Indian languages and the attempt to persuade Indian students that the whole of white American culture represented an infinitely superior and preferable way of living match Carnoy's definitions with accuracy. Despite the vociferous insistence that Indians be treated ultimately as individual United States citizens, the relationships inherent in white efforts to educate Indians displayed the character of those between

colonizer and colonized.[15]

If public education (and the manipulation of language it included) afforded some measure of social control to those who mandated it, the question arises: *control by whom?* Carnoy answered bluntly that the establishment of public education as it stood in nineteenth century America represented the assertion of Protestant control of education.[16] Similarly, French argued that the manipulation of education as a tool of forced accommodation was a significantly Protestant contribution.[17] One need only appraise the degree to which Protestants dominated the government, influential reform groups such as the Lake Mohonk Conferences, and American society in general at that time to find evidence in support of the claim that defense of the status quo versus the perceived threat of Indian cultures implied defense of Protestant domination. (Relating specifically to Indian language policy, it was a Protestant-led charge that struck down government funded bilingual education.) Furthermore, if the common assertion is true that "Americanization" defined the central theme of public education, it is also true that the term "Americanization" itself requires further refinement. "[W]hat especially marked the last decades of the nineteenth century . . . was the subtle transformation that brought about an almost

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[15]Ibid., 19, 27 n. 4, 70.

[16]Ibid., 243.

[17]French, *Psychocultural Change,* 152.

complete identification of Protestantism and Americanism."[18] The Reverend Lyman Abbott captured the essence of this identification between Americanism, Protestantism, and education with particular perspicuity, declaring "Christianity is not merely a thing of churches and school-houses. The post-office is a Christianizing institution; the railroad, with all its corruptions, is a Christianizing power."[19]

Thus public education provided the means by which it was hoped that Indians would be Americanized--largely according to the Protestant concept of that term--and thereby manipulated into a relationship of perpetual subordination. The combined imposition of English and proscription of Indian languages--together the central component of Indian education--played the critical role in this endeavor.

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[18]Prucha, *Great Father,* 623.

[19]*Lake Mohonk Conference Proceedings,* (1885), 51-52, as cited in Prucha, *Great Father,* 624-25.

VIII. "THE LOST PEOPLE": RESULTS, EFFECTS, AND INHERENT PROBLEMS OF THE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

If United States language policy is evaluated ultimately by the degree of its success in educating Indians in the English language, then imposition and prohibition must be deemed anything but triumphant. An 1879 report from a representative agency in the midst of the language program, the Grand River Agency of Dakota, stated that of 200 children on or adjacent to the reservation (of which only 54 attended school a month), only sixteen (including "half-breeds") could read and write English "understandingly."[1] Lame Deer vouched that "in all those years at the day school they never taught me to speak English or to write and read. I learned these things only many years later, in saloons, in the army or in jail."[2] Gauging the accomplishments of the language policy with the benefit that a later perspective in time affords offers no more evidence of the realization of strictly educational

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[1]As cited in United States, *Regulations of the Indian Department,* 191.

[2]Lame Deer and Erdoes, *Lame Deer,* 34.

goals. In 1953, one study concluded that "more than half the children enrolling in federal schools do not use English as a native language. More than 30% of the Indian children in public schools are bilingual. On the average, 15% of all Indian students come from homes where no English is spoken. For many of these children, therefore, English is a second language."[3] As late 1964, another inquiry found that out of 56,000 school age Indian children in New Mexico and Arizona, "not one in a hundred starts school with a knowledge of English."[4] Certainly by these years, had the government's language policy been effective, such numbers would not have been possible.

On the other hand, by this time some nations such as the Pamunkey and Nanticoke spoke only English, and a 1942 effort to teach the Cherokee language in North Carolina Indian schools failed due to apathy.[5] Yet these are eastern nations, nations that had long been closely exposed to white culture and had assimilated much of its aspects by the time of the

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[3]Willard W. Beatty et al., *Education for Cultural Change* (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1953), 504, as cited in Brewton Berry, *The Education of the American Indians: A Survey of the Literature,* 77.

[4]Norman C. Greenberg et al., *Education of the American Indian in Today's World,* (Dubuque: W. C. Brown Book Co., 1964), 11, as cited in Berry, *Education,* 77.

[5]The failed attempt to teach the Cherokee language is culled from Myrtle S. Bonner, "Education and Other Influences in the Cultural Assimilation of the Cherokee Indians on the Qualla Reservation in North Carolina" (master's thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1950), as cited in Berry, *Education,* 79.

late nineteenth century language policy developments. Such Indian nations were not the primary or true targets of the government's stringent and intolerant assimilationism. Instead, defiant western nations such as those of the Dakota Territory and the Southwest--precisely those who most resisted learning English and most successfully maintained their languages--were intended to suffer the brunt of the language policies. Ultimately, the evidence that by the middle of the twentieth century many Indians still did not speak English and that even those who did had not abandoned their Indian languages illustrates the massive failure of the government's program to establish English as the sole language in Indian communities.

Perhaps the autobiographies written by Indians who learned to read, write, and speak English in government schools stand as evidence of a degree of success. However, autobiographers represent a very small--albeit high-profile--minority of Indian students. Furthermore, the autobiographies offer evidence of quite another kind of result: language imposition and prohibition had painful and malignant effects far beyond issues of linguistics for individual Indians and their societies and cultures.

White education often had profoundly inimical consequences according to those Indians who experienced it firsthand. For example, the Stony Indians of Canada used the term *aintsikn ustombe*--"the lost people"--to describe those

individuals, now neither Indian nor white, who returned from school.[6] This perception of the marginalizing effects of white education is substantiated by one scholar who asserted that

> The intended end of [assimilation] was not full-fledged membership into the dominant society. Instead [assimilation] more often involved an educational awareness process whereby Indians were taught the superiority of the European/white ways vis-a-vis those of their respective aboriginal cultures . . . The result was often an Indian who was unacceptable to the majority society and who felt guilty about his or her Indianism.[7]

In turn, this academic evaluation is corroborated by former students themselves. Hoke Denetsosie, Navajo, argued that white schools "only half prepared [Indians] to make a living in the dominant world around us."[8] Another former student lamented that "we come out [of the schools] half red and half white, not knowing what we are."[9] Indian children were pulled out of their communities and cultures, only partially educated in the ways of whites and then left dangling. Lame Deer

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[6]Peter Nabokov, ed., *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophesy to the Present, 1492-1992,* 216. No specific source for this term is provided by Nabokov.

[7]French, *Psychocultural Change,* 152.

[8]Denetsosie quoted from Broderick H. Johnson, ed., *Stories of Traditional Navajo Life and Culture, by Twenty-Two Navajo Men and Women* (Tsaile, Navajo Nation, Arizona: Navajo Community College Press, 1977), 102, as cited in Coleman, *School,* 187.

[9]Lame Deer and Erdoes, *Lame Deer,* 35.

summed up the impact of this program in one trenchant, terse statement: "The schools leave a scar."[10]

One final and telling example serves to illustrate both the tragic effects of deculturative education and the intrinsic bond between such education and language. In 1881, English speaking Omaha--known as "make-believe white men"--requested that Congress divide up their lands into allotments. This request was opposed by a traditional faction of Omaha known as "those who live in earth lodges." Not insignificantly, this traditional faction also opposed white schooling. Ultimately, the accommodative contingent won out with, ironically, the help of noted anthropologist Alice Fletcher, and the Omaha land was broken up. As a result, Omaha farmers eventually lost two-thirds of the land allotted to them because they were not prepared for the complexities and depredations that accompanied the kind of private land ownership practiced by white Americans.[11]

Gauging the degree to which the broader culturally accommodative objectives of government language policy were realized presents a complicated undertaking, for the intent behind the policy was diffuse, elusive, and often misleading. If the intent was to turn American Indians into English-speaking, full United States citizens "with the same rights and privileges which we accord to any other class of people,"

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Nabokov, *Testimony,* 238.

than the program failed miserably.[12] (As will be demonstrated shortly, such claims are rather dubious anyway.) Yet if such benevolent claims merely obscured ulterior motives, and the oft-articulated hope of exterminating Indian languages and Indian cultures--and thereby more effectively imposing control and white interests over Indians--represented the true design, then policy makers probably came closer to success than failure. The above example of the Omaha demonstrates this.

However, for the many Indians who were forcibly required to learn English; who were taught contempt and embarrassment toward the language of their ancestors; and who, through assorted government pressures and measures, gradually abandoned their languages, such arguments merely constitute sophistry. United States government language policy failed the American Indians, precisely those to whom reformers professed benevolence.

The attempt at complete assimilation through education suffered substantially due to essential inherent flaws. First, any discussion of sweeping assimilation was misguided precisely because of its inclusive scope. The diversity of Indian cultures presented far too many factors for the blunt and general assimilation programs to be effective--a point especially relevant at multi-tribal schools such as Carlisle. While consensus exists that some "pivotal and core features of psychological structure" do hold true across tribal

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[12]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 5.

distinctions, many of these common cultural traits--such as reticence, passivity, non-interference, and a strong distaste for the coercive and competitive methods required by white education--directly hindered the government's education program and precluded any realization of substantial success.[13] Furthermore, many Indians were particularly culturally predisposed to resist the siege on their languages. For instance, some Indian cultures "believe that the Indian child knows his language from birth," and "many believe that there is a relationship between race and language, and that Indian blood is a prerequisite for learning an Indian language and hence, by implication, that it is difficult for Indians to learn English."[14] Indians staunchly opposed government efforts to extinguish their languages because language represents an intrinsic and innate component of Indian identity.

That the entire education program hinged upon the success of imposing English also entailed particular difficulties. The myriad languages and dialects of American Indians presented incredible educational obstacles--ranging from those of vocabulary to those of the different cognitive approaches implied by distinct languages--which nineteenth century

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[13]George D. Spindler and Louise S. Spindler, "American Indian Personality Types and Their Sociocultural Roots," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 311, 147. Ohannessian also supports this assertion in Ohannessian, *Teaching English,* 12, 13.

[14]Ohannessian, *Teaching English,* 10, 11.

educators were unprepared to cope with or even recognize. One comprehensive study of the problems that have hindered Indian education found that even a hundred years after the concerted attempt to deliver the English language wholesale to the Indians, ineffective methods of teaching English as a second language to Indian pupils still plagued educators.[15]

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[15]Berry, *Education,* 81.

IX. "OUR OPINION, AND NOT THEIRS, OUGHT TO PREVAIL": WHITE SUPPORT AND RESISTANCE

The language program of imposition and prohibition received substantial, though not unified and often indirect, support from the diverse representatives of American society whom such policies would not directly affect--that is, whites. Regarding the government's language policy, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs declared in 1886--at the height of assimilationist zeal and endeavors--that the government apparatus was monolithic in its support: "so far as I am advised, there is no dissent either among the law-makers or the executive agents who are selected under the law to do the work."[1] This contention is somewhat dubious in light of the fact that it comes from an official with particular self-interest invested in the success of the policy. Such a statement might reflect a strategically manipulative effort to deny or gloss over any effective opposition. Yet it is noteworthy that the Commissioner, in such a high-profile declaration, neither attempted

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[1]*ARCIA*, 1886, xxiv.

to mobilize his supporters nor decry the errors or injustices of any opposition policy. One can safely assume therefore that any existing opposition was at best small and unthreatening. Furthermore, the Commissioner's unqualified claim of confidence is corroborated with the added acuity of hindsight: regarding the educational prime directive of total assimilation, one historian asserted that "only a few men spoke out against such proposals and they were quickly overwhelmed."[2]

Far more complicated than the above blanket statements acknowledge, the issue of language policy attracted extensive debate. Yet even the dissent is often misleading, frequently representing not opposition to the ultimate aims of the government's policy, but merely to the means by which those objectives were to be realized. The 1880 minority report from the House of Representatives' Committee on Indian Affairs criticized the assimilation program as neglecting Indian diversity: "it applies the same rule to all without regard to the wide differences in their condition."[3] However, this criticism referred only to such distinctions as those that separated such Indian nations as "the roving and predatory Utes" from the "nearly civilized Omahas and Poncas." The "civilization" of Indians was still the goal, and white American civilization still represented the standard.

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[2]Prucha, *Americanizing,* 8.

[3]*House Report* no. 1576, 46 Congress, 2 session, serial 1938, 7-10, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 124.

The minority report also pointed out that assimilationist efforts would attract significant opposition because of Indian cultures themselves. "The whole training of an Indian from his birth, the whole history of the Indian race, and the entire array of Indian tradition, running back at least four hundred years, all combine to predispose the Indian against this scheme for his improvement, devised by those who judge him exclusively from *their* standpoint instead of *his*."[4] However, such apparently perceptive and sympathetic sentiments were directed toward specific ends and represented not a more virtuous approach toward Indian Affairs, but merely a different perspective on the proper chronology of civilizing the Indians. Utilized explicitly as an argument versus allotment, the report's sentiments were simultaneously used to illustrate the importance of imposing the English language on Indians. Since "in all the Indian languages there is no word answering to the Latin *habeo*--have or possess," the report argued, Indians must be taught the English language prior to allotment. In order to socialize them in the self-interest that defines capitalistic, white American society, Indians first had to learn the language that reflects and embodies such concepts.[5]

Colorado Senator Henry M. Teller similarly opposed Indian policy as it stood. Despite professing ownership of a "heart

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[4]Ibid., 125.

[5]Ibid., 126.

that beats as warmly for the Indian as that of any other man living," he wholeheartedly advocated assimilating Indians through imposed education. "It does not accomplish the great purpose of civilization to send a few wild Indians down to Hampton and a few up to Carlisle . . . We must put the schools in the Indian community; we must bring the influences where a whole Indian tribe or a whole band will be affected and influenced by them."[6] Teller merely predicted the failure of the government's assimilation program unless the emphasis was diverted from severalty to cultural imposition. "I say to-day that you cannot make any Indian on this continent, I do not care where he is, while he remains *anything like an Indian in sentiment and feeling*, take land in severalty." Furthermore,

> The trouble with this question of land in severalty is, that the friends of the measure have adopted the end for the means. They have turned things right around. When an Indian becomes civilized, when he becomes Christianized, when he knows the value of a home . . . then he is prepared to take land in severalty . . . and to discharge all the duties of citizenship in the highest sense of the term.[7]

That the Indian must be "civilized" according to the white standard was a foregone conclusion. As far as Teller, the House committee, and most white dissenters were concerned, the

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[6]*Congressional Record*, XI, part I, (46 Congress, 3 session), 780-81, 783, 934-35, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 136, 137.

[7]Ibid., 132, 140. Emphasis added.

agenda of the assimilation program represented the only unresolved issue.

There were notable white Americans who, to some extent, defended Indian rights. Merrill E. Gates, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners who often presided over the Mohonk Conferences, declared that a primary duty of all friends of the Indian was to "guard the rights of the Indian." Such sentiments are rather surprising coming from someone who expressed his version of contempt for Indians in such statements as "there is hardly one tribe outside the five civilized tribes which can merit the name of an organized society." Yet Gates made his defense of Indian rights more explicit, arguing that "the Indians have a perfect right to bring up their children in the old devotion to the tribe and the chief. To require anything else of them is unreasonable. These are their ancestral institutions. We have no right to meddle with them." The perplexing paradox ends abruptly here, as Gates quickly pointed out that he offered these statements merely as a risible illustration of what he deems the "false view" of Indian policy. Instead, Gates championed the belief that the government held an obligation to fervidly intervene and disrupt Indian traditional culture: "we must not only offer them education, we must force it upon them."[8] What Gates

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[8]All the above quotations are drawn from "Land and Law as Agents in Educating Indians," in the *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners* (1885), 17-19, 26-35, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 54, 49, 50, 52.

intended by protecting "the rights of the Indian," then, was the protection of an Indian's right to live according to white principles. An Indian's private property, his individualism, and his Christian education would be defended once he set himself apart from the tribe. The extermination of Indian cultures in general and Indian languages specifically had therefore been deftly categorized under the heading of Indian privilege.

Even the arguments of supposedly pro-Indian reformers followed a similar tack while asserting that the first priority of Indian policy must be the immediate extension of full legal protection to the Indians. According to the Reverend William Justin Harsha, an acknowledged advocate of Indian legal equality, legal coverage should be offered not as a measure to ensure Indian self-determination, but to eliminate the resistance to acculturation that accompanies legal inequality and its subsequent feelings of oppression. As advocated by Harsha, extending legal protection to Indians would not protect Indian culture, but accelerate its elimination.[9] Thus, while such reformers may have in some measure resisted the existing program to assimilate Indians, their opposition was only temporary; they believed that Indians would themselves desire acculturation once the premature education efforts were properly predicated upon legal

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[9]"Law for the Indians," *North American Review*, CXXXIV (1882), 272, 281-83, 287-92, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 149-154.

"equality." Unfortunately, Harsha's antipathy toward the oppression inherent in legal inequality did not extend to the cultural oppression manifest in assimilation.

The government itself engaged in ostensibly protecting Indian rights. Presented as a benevolent measure intended to halt depredations against Indians by providing them the full protection of United States law, the government moved to strike down legal distinctions based on "racial dissimilarity." Indians were to be treated as all other Americans, no longer as a special or separate class of citizens. In fact, this was an essential motive behind (and expected result of) the Dawes Act's breaking up of tribal authority.[10] Yet this particular component of United States Indian policy discloses the ironic and ultimately insidious nature of the assimilationist program, for claims of equality disguised profoundly hypocritical and pernicious efforts. It was only by entirely disregarding Indian civil rights that Indian children could be dragged off to school--their attendance guaranteed by government sanctions enabling the withholding of subsistence rations, the mere existence of which belied rejections of distinct status--where they would be methodically stripped of their culture and forced to abandon their language and adopt English. It also should be noted that claims of cultural, rather than racial, dissimilarity do not excuse Indian policy from accusations of hypocrisy. For while coerced assimilation

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[10]Priest, *Stepchildren,* 247.

was often presented as a remedy to overcome aspects of the cultural "inferiority" of Indians, this intent cannot be separated from contemporary ideas concerning race: in the nineteenth century, no distinction was made or understood between race and culture, and the two were viewed as one and the same.[11] Thus it was precisely Indian "racial dissimilarity" that provided the justification for the government's assimilationist program at the same time the government was disavowing such notions.[12]

Public opinion ran along similar lines. While some of the harsher methods--such as withholding rations and having police drag unwilling Indian students off to schools--roused public ill-will, there are abundant references to policy reflecting and responding to the popular desire for complete assimilation. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs went so far as to declare that the vox populi had even imposed a deadline

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[11]Theories such as polygenism, biological determinism, and social evolution fell in and out of favor as the debate raged over establishing the scientific basis for the white assumption of Indian (and black) inferiority. In this debate, culture was firmly attached to ideas of race; culture was viewed as determined by the same factors that determined racial qualities, and was seen as an expression of racial identity. For discussions of nineteenth century scientific concepts regarding race and culture, see Bieder, *Science;* Gould, *Mismeasure;* and Stanton, *Leopard's Spots*.

[12]This presents an ignominious conundrum regarding the nature of United States principles, for either the government's claims of Indian equality were blatantly hypocritical and steeped in scandalous ulterior motives, or the government was sincere in believing that all citizens should be coerced into conformity if their way of life did not suit the elite-defined, white American standard.

of sorts: compelling Indian students to speak English was requisite "so long as the American public now demand that Indians shall become white men within one generation."[13] Again, one must be somewhat wary of ascribing too much sincerity to the Indian Commissioner's statement rationalizing Indian policy; politically self-serving declarations hardly provoke astonishment. Yet history serves to confirm his estimation of public sentiment. The decidedly meager opposition to assimilation could only propose modest and ultimately inefficacious objections because general "hatred of Indian institutions had become so acute that no halt was possible in the campaign to abolish them."[14]

But register objections the public did, led primarily by reform organizations and their publications. However, even this antagonism was not especially sizable. Although Commissioner J.C.D. Atkins's 1887 report alluded to the considerable public press regarding the prohibition of Indian languages, such an evaluation does not necessarily indicate substantial dissent.[15] Rather, opposition to assimilation was championed by a small contingent: "so overwhelming was the popularity of assimilation that criticism was limited almost entirely to members of the National Indian Defense Association."[16] Led by

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[13]*ARCIA,* 1881, xxxiv.

[14]Priest, *Stepchildren,* 148.

[15]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxiv.

[16]Priest, *Stepchildren,* 147.

tolerant and somewhat radical reformers Dr. Theodore A. Bland and Alfred B. Meacham, this organization and its pro-Indian publication *The Council Fire* preached non-interference with and protection of Indian cultures. Yet even these reformers worked toward the eventual assimilation of Indians, arguing only that Indian institutions should be preserved to assist Indians in working toward assimilation at their own pace. Despite support for the Indian communistic system and other components of traditional Indian culture, Bland and comrades were, according to Priest--himself an advocate of overcoming the "racial failings" that hindered Indians--"sufficiently realistic to admit that the race must ultimately conform to white customs. Their primary aim therefore was to prevent changes which would destroy Indian individuality by their suddenness."[17] However these resistance efforts were in fact short-lived and of only little effect, "except perhaps to strengthen the reformers in their determination to move ahead against all opposition."[18]

Objections to the efforts to eradicate Indian cultures emanated from the field of ethnology. Yet even these criticisms of assimilation were neither as widespread nor as adamant as one might expect from a group whose very livelihood was jeopardized by the culturally destructive policies already implemented. That ethnologists protested the government's

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[17]Ibid., 114, 148.

[18]Ibid., 140.

program to deculturate the Indians is clear. In fact, none other than Captain Pratt felt compelled to rebuke ethnologists for endorsing traditional Indian cultures.[19] The support for Indian cultures came from specific and influential proponents: James Mooney defended Indian rights and freedom; Frank Hamilton Cushing, who became a Zuni priest, advocated leaving Indians to themselves; and others like Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, George Catlin, Lewis Henry Morgan, and John Wesley Powell collected a variety of valuable information regarding Indian oldways.[20] Yet despite such defenses of and interest in traditional Indian cultures, the program to substitute the English language continued unfettered and successfully enough that a later colleague of the aforementioned anthropologists, Franz Boas, would bemoan the fact that much of the substance and style of every day, spoken Indian languages had been irretrievably lost.[21]

In bringing about this effect, ethnologists, despite some notable efforts to the contrary, were complicitous. Lewis Henry Morgan objected to attempts at immediate assimilation. However, he based his opposition on theories that, while intending to demonstrate Indian unpreparedness to progress rapidly up the ladder of civilization, actually served to confirm and officially sanction white ethnocentric ideas of

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[19]Prucha, *Great Father,* 699.

[20]Nabokov, *Testimony,* 217-218.

[21]Boas, *Race,* 200.

the inferiority of Indian cultures. Morgan saw Indians as at "a low stage of barbarism, immensely below the plane of civilization" with "the skulls and brains of barbarians." In defense of his resistance to unrestrained assimilation efforts, he asked the rhetorical question "how could they, any more than our remote barbarous ancestors, jump ethnical periods?"[22] John Wesley Powell, the father of American ethnology and the first director of the Bureau of Ethnology (created in 1879 through his insistence), endeavored to "put American Indian policy for the first time on a scientific footing."[23] However, his concept of scientific footing did not bode well for the targets of Indian policy, mired as it was in notions of hierarchical social evolution--with Indians firmly categorized far below the representatives of white American culture. Therefore Powell--despite a definite interest in Indian cultures, despite personal efforts expended to collect Indian vocabularies along the Colorado River, and despite the fact that he had learned to speak both the Ute and Southern Paiute languages--advocated replacing Indian languages as a necessary step to more thorough cultural assimilation. "Savagery is not inchoate civilization," he argued, but "a

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[22]L.H.Morgan, "Factory System for Indian Reservations," *Nation,* XXIII (July 27, 1876), 58, ; Morgan to President Hayes in Bernhard Stern, *Lewis Henry Morgan* (Chicago, 1931), 58; and L. H. Morgan, "The Indian Question," *Nation,* XXVII (Nov. 28, 1878), 332-33; all as cited in Dippie, *Vanishing,* 166.

[23]Morgan, "Indian Question," 322-23, as cited in Dippie, *Vanishing,* 166.

distinct status of society, with its own institutions, customs, philosophy and religion; and all of this must necessarily be overthrown before new institutions, customs, philosophy and religion can be introduced."[24]

Thus much of the opposition registered by ethnologists is, similar to that of even pro-Indian reform organizations, highly misleading. Although engaged in studying and collecting aspects of traditional American Indian cultures and arguing that immediate assimilation was improbable, leading ethnologists such as Powell, Morgan, and Alice Fletcher actively encouraged assimilationist efforts. For them, assimilation represented a preferable alternative to the imminent extinction that resistance to the tide of encroaching white civilization would bring.

> While they spoke knowingly of progressive development through prescribed ethnical periods, of barbaric skulls that could not absorb civilized teachings, and of peoples who lagged centuries behind and were still in the infancy of cultural growth, reformers looked anxiously at the Indians' present situation and concluded that immutable natural laws would have to be ignored.[25]

For many ethnologists, it was as one reformer remarked of

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[24]J.W. Powell to Carl Schurz, Sec. of Interior, Nov. 1, 1878, in "Surveys of the Territories: Letters from the Acting President of the National Academy of Sciences Transmitting a Report on the Survey of the Territories" (Dec. 3, 1878), in *House Misc. Documents* no. 5, 45 Congress, 3 session, 26-27, as cited in Dippie, *Vanishing,* 168.

[25]Dippie, *Vanishing,* 171.

Alice Fletcher: "her philanthropy swallowed up her anthropology."[26]

Substantial and steadfast opposition to the sweeping prohibition of Indian languages, though anomalous, was not nonexistent in white society: missionary resolve to use the indigenous vernaculars as a means of instruction remained determined. Claiming that prohibiting instruction in Indian languages constituted a form of religious persecution because it impeded Indians' learning of Christianity, religious organizations engaged the government in bitter conflict over the initially unconditional ban of Indian languages.[27] The government acquiesced, declaring that the "preaching of the Gospel to Indians in the vernacular is, of course, not prohibited." Furthermore, such methods were deemed by the government as "essential in explaining the precepts of the Christian religion to adult Indians who do not understand."[28]

The denominational defense of the right to instruct Indians in their native languages should be recognized, however, not as a victory for tolerance of cultural diversity, but as a demonstration of the power of white self-interest. Religious organizations merely had a different priority in their attempt to transform the Indians--conversion--a goal

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[26]Philip C. Garrett, "Indian Citizenship," *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference* (1886), 8-11, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 59.

[27]Prucha, *Great Father,* 691.

[28]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxiv.

that the government as well held in high esteem. Bilingual education simply expedited the realization of this particular objective. The true sectarian attitudes toward the value of Indian languages were not discordant with those of government policy. This is evident in the sentiments expressed by the Reverend Lyman Abbott, who, in advocating a full-scale educational system for Indians, argued at Lake Mohonk in 1888 that

> while the government was wholly wrong in assuming to prohibit individual societies and churches from teaching what doctrine they pleased in what language they chose, so long as they paid the expenses out of their own pockets, it was wholly right in refusing to spend a dollar of the people's money to educate a pagan population in a foreign tongue. The impalpable walls of language are more impenetrable than walls of stone. It would be in vain to destroy the imaginary line which surrounds the reservation if we leave the Indian hedged about by an ignorance of the language of his neighbors; this would be to convert him from the gypsy isolated into a gypsy of the neighborhood.[29]

As in the example of denominational opposition to government language policy, most white attitudes toward that policy can be explained by a discussion that reduces the issues to the central component of self-interest. The significant appeal of the language policy in particular and of the assimilationist program in general existed in the fact that it quenched the multifarious desires of diverse white

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[29]*Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conferences of Friends of the Indian* (1888), 11-16, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 213.

interest groups. Assimilation crossed sectional concerns. It attracted the eastern progressives who sought to appease the demons of their benevolence by bestowing the gifts of reform, Christianity, education, and civilization upon Indians. Westerners could stand behind the same program because it promised to pacify their defiant Indian neighbors. Assimilation also appealed to both the benevolent- and malevolent-minded; whether one's intent was sharing "progress" or appropriating Indian land, "civilizing" the Indians promised opportunity.

Yet even distilled to the elemental issue of self-interest, the contradictory stances taken by proponents and opponents of assimilation were intriguingly convoluted. While one western homesteader might have found his fears of Indian reprisals and resistance allayed by the program of assimilation, another protested educating Indians because it equipped them to more effectively resist white depredations. Representative James W. Throckmorton of Texas put words to this white apprehension, arguing that educated Indians had become the most "cunning and treacherous of their race."[30] Western cattlemen resisted assimilation because preserving aspects of traditional Indian cultures--especially the large tribal landholdings--might enable them to continue cultivating the exclusive white access to expanses of tribal land. Yet other westerners, in the hopes of securing their own smaller slices

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[30]Elaine Goodale Eastman, *Red Man's Moses,* 97.

of presently Indian land, put aside their trepidations to side with the eastern reformers whose encompassing Americanizing program rejected Indian cultures and the holding of communal land based upon them. Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows encouraged and glorified (and profited from) traditional Indian cultures and thereby strengthened the monolithic image of a braided-haired, mounted Indian in the national consciousness. At the same time, reformers diligently pushed onward in their efforts to eradicate all remnants of the reality of that image (including attempting to prohibit Indian involvement in Cody's shows.)[31] Spanning such conflicting perspectives, white self-interest remained the consistent, guiding principle.

Self-serving or otherwise, whatever white resistance to the language policies did exist ultimately can be characterized as either tepid or tangential. Ethnologists ascribed some value to Indian languages through both statements and through their extensive investigative endeavors, but they balked at rejecting the efforts to assimilate Indians. Religious organizations directly opposed the inclusive ban on Indian languages, but only because one specific aspect hindered the proselytizing efforts central to their existence. In fact, the general assault on Indian languages remained mostly unchallenged for the simple reason that the end toward

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[31]Prucha, *Great Father,* 712-715. Prucha discusses a range of white responses to both traditional Indian cultures and to the education meant to eliminate them.

which that attack endeavored--the elimination of "Indian-ness"--was widely accepted.

X. OLDWAYS AND NEW: INDIAN RESPONSES TO WHITE EDUCATION AND ITS LANGUAGE POLICIES

In responding to the United States government's attempt to entirely substitute English in place of their own languages, Indians themselves did not present a unified voice. This is in no way surprising, for the immense differences between Indian cultures and between individual Indians themselves naturally entailed a wide range of reactions to the assimilation program. Michael Coleman, in his examination of Indian autobiographical information relating to education, lists seven major factors that determined the myriad and dynamic Indian responses: kin, cultural background, peers, personal motivation, specific curriculum, institutional context, and the impact of the educators/whites.[1] These powerful and overlapping forces shaped the ways that Indians responded to white education in general and to the extermination of Indian languages that represented the central objective of that education. Although Indian responses were as distinct as the

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[1]Coleman, *School,* 69.

individuals who demonstrated them, the three general categories that Coleman defined--support, resistance, and rejection--prove useful despite some crucial qualifications to be discussed below.

For many Indians, recognizing the importance of "going to see some writing"--the Winnebago phrase for schooling--drew them to support at least partially the government's attempt to educate them according to white principles.[2] Yet such support must be understood not as a submissive, accommodative gesture, but as a positive, creative response to the rapidly changing world Indians saw around them. The true character of these responses is evident in the reasons that Indians advocated pursuing white education. For example, Asa Daklugie recalled that his uncle, Geronimo, insisted that he accompany Captain Pratt to Carlisle because "without this training in the ways of the White Eyes our people could never compete with them . . . it was necessary that those destined for leadership prepare themselves to cope with the enemy."[3] Similarly, a Shawnee chief encouraged Thomas Alford and other young men of the tribe to learn to read and write in English so that the Shawnee nation could "use the club of the white man's wisdom against him in defense of [Shawnee] customs."[4] Indian

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[2]Nabokov, *Testimony,* 215. Nabokov cites this phrase but offers no specific source.

[3]Asa Daklugie et al., *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey,* edited by Eve Ball, 135-36.

[4]Thomas Wildcat Alford, *Civilization,* 73.

acceptance of white education was therefore a means to adapt to the new context of an ever-encroaching white civilization. For the numerous Indians who chose to pursue white education, the decision represented a tactic of asserting Indian strength and Indian rights.

Specific support for learning the English language--which necessarily entailed formally forgoing use of one's native tongue during the process--was expressed by the students themselves. Asa Daklugie recalled that "learning English wasn't too bad . . . I wanted desperately to be able to read."[5] Refugio Savala, a Yaqui student and later poet, said he "started writing and became a word hunter in English and Spanish." Francis LaFlesche, Omaha, described his joy at working through the alphabet and learning to read short sentences.[6] And at least two Indian autobiographers remembered going above and beyond the prescribed regulations to enhance their English language skills. Irene Stewart, when she transferred to a school where Indian languages were not prohibited, continued to speak English. Jason Betzinez quit his "outing" with a Quaker farm family because he felt it took

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[5]Daklugie, *Indeh,* 144-47, as cited in Coleman, *School,* 107.

[6]Refugio Savala, *Autobiography of a Yaqui Poet,* 44-45, as cited in Coleman, *School,* 107; and Francis LaFlesche, *Middle Five,* 13. Although it is clear that LaFlesche simply enjoyed the challenge and thrill of learning, it is also obvious that his determined efforts to learn English reflected a strong desire to please his schoolmate, mentor, and best friend, Brush.

too much time away from his learning English.[7]

Yet such sentiments of support do not necessarily embody rejections of traditional Indian cultures. As stated above, many Indians recognized the pragmatic benefits of understanding white culture and of being able to work within it to defend tribal identity and rights. Also, many Indian students were drawn to learning the language and practices of a strange culture for a variety of other reasons. To some, attending school satisfied a curious nature or fulfilled a desire to court challenge and adventure. For one particular young Indian, being a student meant avoiding the tedium and hard work of having to tend sheep.[8] Such reasons reflect common human traits. They may also have more to do with traditional Indian cultural values than with cultural accommodation. For example, pushing oneself to confront and master the unknown challenge of learning English at a distant boarding school may have represented an adaptive, creative attempt to fit a new experience into the traditional Indian context in which courage and testing one's potential were highly valued.

Whites tended to grossly overestimate the extent to which Indian pursuit of white education constituted an abandonment of Indian cultures. Succumbing to what one scholar called the

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[7]Irene Stewart, *A Voice in Her Tribe*, 34, Jason Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo,* 154-59, both cited in Coleman, *School,* 108, 113, respectively.

[8]Don Talayesva, *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*, edited by Leo W. Simmons, 94, as cited in Coleman, *School*, 69.

"myth of assimilation"--which takes outward manifestations such as the adoption of English and the absence of visible traditional cultural traits such as feathers and braids as evidence of successful assimilation--whites remained ignorant of the substantial maintenance of vibrant Indian cultures. Meanwhile, such critical components of traditional Indian ways of life as native languages continued to flourish.[9]

Rather than relinquishing their traditional cultures in favor of the culture of white Americans, those Indians who undertook white education strove to shape it to their needs. To many Indians, white education simply represented an unavoidably indispensable supplement to the traditional education preserved within Indian communities. "Indeed, to the extent that Indian adults exercised choice, they sent their children to school to learn *white* ways; they themselves would teach the oldways."[10] In this sense, the Indian education program was somewhat mutually satisfying to both Indians and whites: Indians sought the individual and tribal benefits afforded by white education, and whites reveled in the fact that at least some Indians were enthusiastically cultivating

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[9]Albert Wahrhaftig, "Community and the Caretakers," *New University Thought*, iv:4, Winter, 1966-67, as cited in Berry, *Education,* 72-73. Whites failed to understand that adoption of English did not necessarily mean abandonment of Indian languages; many Indians merely learned English as a second language. Furthermore, such aspects of traditional Indian culture as social relationships and conceptions of themselves as a people survived despite incorporation of the more obvious aspects of white culture.

[10]Coleman, *School,* 112.

aspects of white culture.

Through this bifurcated approach to education some Indians aspired to much higher ends than most reformers recognized or set for themselves. Both the duality of and the high expectations for the education process pursued by those Indians who sought instruction in white schools are especially articulated by Joseph LaFlesche. LaFlesche, a principal chief of the Omaha, sent his son Francis to white schools so that the young boy "might profit by the teachings of [our] own people and that of the white race." According to LaFlesche's counsel, whites "have in their books the utterances of great and learned men. I had treasured the hope that you would wish to know the good deeds done by men of your own race, and by men of the white race, that you would follow their example and take pleasure in doing the things that are noble and helpful to those around you."[11] In this passage, the elder LaFlesche demonstrated an awareness of the benefits of cultural diversity that intolerant white educational policy never acknowledged and in fact endeavored to deny and reject. White policy makers never came close to embracing a program of such simple virtue, and thus LaFlesche's eloquent expression stands through history as a dramatic and neglected alternative to the assimilationism ascribed to by the United States.

A significant number of Indians did actively and optimistically seek white education, of which English language

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[11]LaFlesche, *Middle Five,* 127-28.

instruction was understood by all parties as the dominant theme. Parents willingly sent children off to school, and some children looked forward to and then enjoyed their experiences there. Yet nowhere is there evidence that even these Indians supported the sweeping *prohibition* of Indian languages. While many Indians courted white education and English instruction, the denigration and elimination of their traditional languages was encouraged by none. Instead, Indians who chose to pursue white education did so defiantly, undertaking a difficult process they recognized as coercive and intolerant, yet resisting the methods and attitudes that never succeeded in vanquishing Indian love and respect for their traditional languages and cultures. Carl Sweezy, an Arapaho, described the ambivalence that must have characterized many an Indian's sentiments toward white education.

> We had everything to learn about the white man's road . . . We had to learn to live by farming instead of by hunting and trading; we had to learn from people who did not speak our language or try to learn it except for a few words, though they expected us to learn theirs. We had to learn to cut our hair short, and to wear close-fitting clothes made of dull-colored cloth, and to live in houses, though we knew that our long braids of hair and embroidered robes and moccasins and tall, round lodges were more beautiful.[12]

Furthermore, the qualified support of those Indians who actively encouraged seeking white education may be misleading.

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[12]Carl Sweezy, *The Arapaho Way, A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood,* edited by Althea Bass, 5.

For if even these somewhat accommodative individuals resisted the wholesale rejection of Indian cultures, then it is likely that the vast majority of Indians engaged at least to some extent in resisting white education. The issue of attempting to categorize Indian responses to education itself becomes complicated; distinctions blur easily. For instance, Geronimo's advice to his nephew to undertake white education in order to more successfully compete with whites must stand as both support and resistance. Therefore resistance and support may not be truly discrete categories, but rather overlapping responses on a dynamic spectrum. True, there is a distinction to be found between those who willingly sent their children to school and those who had to be coerced into acceptance through police action or the withholding of rations. Yet even the children whose parents encouraged attendance at school practiced many of the same measures of resistance--and even rejection--described below.

First, it is valuable to recognize a difference between resistance to and rejection of white education. As Coleman pointed out, "resistance means those forms of pupil opposition to the school and its staff that were compatible with continued attendance, often compatible with impressive achievement as a student."[13] Thus as accommodating and exemplary a student as Francis LaFlesche, whose father so eloquently expressed his support for white education, could violate

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[13]Coleman, *School,* 146.

school rules by engaging in such tactics of resistance as the telling of traditional tribal stories.[14] In this sense even those students excelling in education must be recognized as actively shaping education to their needs, of asserting and maintaining tribal and individual identity in the face of concerted pressure to do just the opposite. Resistance was not "to prevent learning or to plot permanent escape." Instead, resistance tactics "institutionalized both resistance and acceptance, and expressed fundamentally ambivalent pupil responses. Although always a threat to the total control sought by school authorities, such [methods] could also work to their advantage by making school more bearable to the students."[15] Thus the students themselves molded white education to their visions of its means and ends.

Rules prohibiting the use of Indian languages in the schools were explicit, encompassing, and well understood. Thus students were quite aware that speaking in their native tongue was not allowed and would result in hardly subtle forms of punishment: "we were told never to talk Indian and if we were caught, we got a strapping with a leather belt."[16] Lame Deer recalled that the punishment expected for breaking the prohibition of Indian languages was perniciously diverse,

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[14]Ibid., 152.

[15]Ibid., 157.

[16]"Lone Wolf Returns...to that Long Ago Time," in *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, vol. 22, no. 1. (1972), reprinted in Nabokov, *Testimony,* 220.

ranging from being forced to stand nose to a wall or being beaten with a brass-studded ruler.[17] The ample evidence of punishment received--including memories of bruised bodies and psyches--stands therefore as a sort of corpus delicti of equally substantial Indian resistance.[18]

Despite understanding the punishment that resistance entailed, Indian children resisted the prohibition of their languages not only frequently, but wittingly and willfully. According to Frank Mitchell, a student at the Fort Defiance Boarding School, "most of the time we talked Navajo, our own language, to each other. They did not understand us."[19] Another student recalled that "the children stayed some distance from those in authority, or whispered, covering their mouths, when they wished to use their native tongue."[20] And, somewhat more defiantly, the indomitable Lame Deer claimed

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[17]Lame Deer and Erdoes, *Lame Deer,* 33.

[18]Consider the substantial evidence that Indian students frequently received harsh corporal punishment for speaking their banned native languages in light of the not uncommon ethnohistorical evidence that many Indian cultural groups traditionally disapproved of using physical punishment upon their children. For example, in Jim Whitewolf [pseudonym], *Jim Whitewolf: The Life of a Kiowa Apache Indian,* edited by Charles S. Brant, Brant asserts that the Kiowa never physically punish their children, for their "mores oppose it strongly," 29. Whites typically viewed the opposition of Indian parents to physical punishment as indulgent and argued that it "spoiled" Indian children.

[19]Frank Mitchell, *Navajo Blessingway Singer,* 66, as cited in Coleman, *School,* 152.

[20] Kay Bennett, *Kaibah,* 226-27, as cited in Coleman, *School,* 152.

that he once cursed a white educator in Lakota, a diversionary smile upon his young face.[21] Ultimately, any use of an Indian language in school constituted resistance to the uncompromising ban imposed upon them.

Indian recalcitrance took subtler and more general forms. For example, various tribes skirted the language prohibition by using tribal funds to contract with the mission schools which continued bilingual education.[22] Furthermore, since language policy and education in general were inseparable--and indistinguishable in terms of their ultimate objectives and guiding principles--resistance to education must also represent resistance to language imposition and prohibition. Thus unsuccessful struggles to avoid or escape schooling constituted resistance to the language policies. Even passivity--ranging from non-participation in the classroom to deliberately denying one's full potential in school--represented effective resistance according to Coleman.[23] In recalling his opposition to education, Lame Deer declared "I wouldn't cooperate in the remaking of myself. I played the dumb Indian. They couldn't make me into an apple--red outside and white inside."[24] Assertion of tribal identity demonstrated

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[21]Lame Deer and Erdoes, *Lame Deer,* 34.

[22]Leibowitz, "Language Policy," 4. Tribal monies had been ruled beyond the scope of the act prohibiting the direction of funds to sectarian schools.

[23]Coleman, *School,* 154.

[24]Lame Deer and Erdoes, *Lame Deer,* 35.

similarly subtle resistance, as students went truant to attend tribal ceremonies and celebrations. Rather than a conscious effort to oppose education, such actions may merely reflect an expression of homesickness or of simple desire--the students may have just enjoyed taking part in traditional ceremonies. Regardless, these actions effectively hindered the assimilation process and therefore constituted resistance. Coleman asserted that in fact "all cases of syncretic blending of traditions should be seen as cultural resistance to school demands for total rejection of the tribal past and total acceptance of the Christian civilization."[25]

Indian children engaged in a variety of indirect, but nonetheless disruptive, resistance tactics. While one student's inclinations led to his filing a complaint with the Indian Rights Association regarding school conditions, others resorted to less ambitious methods such as releasing school pigs from their pens to ensure that time for their recovery would be time out of the classroom. Tactics of registering resistance to white education also included such measures as circumventing sex segregation rules or refusing to submit to corporal punishment.[26] One shrewdly refractory group of students devised descriptive, disparaging names in Navajo for

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[25]Coleman, *School,* 151.

[26]Ibid., 148-49.

the faculty and staff of which they did not approve.[27] Though mischievous and perhaps a little puerile, such a strategy was no less explicit in its expression of contempt for the educational process in general and the language prohibition specifically.

Looking back upon Indian education from the vantage point of the early twentieth century, one scholar of the English language declared that "the Indian" had never "taken enthusiastic advantage of such opportunities as he had to learn English. Too proud to make himself ridiculous by inadequate attempts to speak an unknown language, he preferred either to remain silent or to transact necessary negotiations through an interpreter."[28] This evaluation of Indian receptiveness to white efforts to impose English does find qualified support in historical analyses. A prominent historian argued that as "few tribes showed any intention of accepting educational facilities willingly, the necessity for forceful methods was increasingly admitted."[29] But any perception of Indian resistance that denies the positive, culturally assertive, creative opposition to acculturation is inherently flawed. Despite being outnumbered and oppressed by an ever-encroaching white civilization, Indians *chose* to resist white culture and

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[27]Mitchell, *Navajo Blessingway Singer,* as cited in Coleman, *School*, 147.

[28]Krapp, *English,* 267.

[29]Priest, *Stepchildren,* 152.

did so with fortitude; Indians opposed language education and resisted using English because they already possessed beloved, expressive, and effective languages of their own.[30]

Beyond qualified support and determined resistance, many Indians shunned white education outright and thereby entirely rejected any efforts toward language imposition and prohibition. Yet evidence from those who most thoroughly rejected white education is scarce because, by avoiding education altogether, these Indians drastically limited the voice that history would grant them. Autobiographical data may therefore skew estimations of the balance between support, resistance, and rejection, precisely because those most inclined or able to write their memoirs (and encouraged to do so by white literary powers) would logically be those who did not, for whatever reasons, reject white education. However, autobiographical evidence does serve the invaluable purpose of acting as witness to feats of rejection, of providing a voice to the often voiceless. And so one finds such evidence as that related by Jim Whitewolf. In describing his experiences at school, Whitewolf recalled that he fled on three occasions, voluntarily returning only the first time. Despite being forcibly returned after the next two attempts to escape, Whitewolf went on to write an autobiography, an autobiography

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[30]Consider Francis LaFlesche's description of his native Omaha language: "the beauty and picturesqueness, the euphonious playfulness, or the gravity of diction which I heard among my own people." LaFlesche, *Middle Five,* xix.

in which he recounted the story of those who had fled with him on each escape. And thus exists the ample evidence of those Indians who refused to submit to white culture.[31]

As with support and resistance, a variety of expressions embodied rejection. Many students rejected all aspects of white education by--through either their parents' or their own methods--entirely avoiding school. Unfortunately for many similarly disposed, however, the United States considered its Indian education program neither voluntary nor optional. One Indian student recalled that "the government had decided we were to get the white man's education by force . . . None of us wanted to go and our parents did not want to let us go."[32] Soldiers and police did the dirty work. But rejection of white education continued, transplanted to the schools themselves. Coleman asserted that such manifestations of defiance as arson, chronic truancy or escape, expulsion due to extreme intransigence or refusal to submit to school codes (such as haircuts), and suicide constituted effective efforts of rejection.[33] Although Coleman hedged somewhat on the issue of suicide--stating that explicit evidence is lacking--Lame Deer confirmed this tragic response to school, remembering the

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[31]Whitewolf, *Whitewolf*, 87-90.

[32]"Lone Wolf Returns," reprinted in Nabokov, *Testimony*, 220.

[33]Coleman, *School*, 165-7.

ten year old student who hanged herself.[34]

There is reason to believe that language policy in particular played a substantial role in inciting Indian rejections of white education. Abandoning aspects of Indian cultures for white held no tremendous appeal on any count for most Indians. Therefore marked Indian resistance attended all attempts to impose white culture. And although probably swollen with some degree of paranoia and self-interest, the sweeping statement of one Agent Armstrong of the Crow does reverberate with a measure of veracity: "The truth is the Indians hate the white man's life in their hearts."[35] Yet according to one historian, language policy's effect on Indian reactions was especially crucial, for "the English language . . . was probably a major factor in producing acceptance or rejection."[36] Regardless of the degree of validity one grants to the preceding statement, the fact remains that many Indians flatly rejected white education and whatever language policy might have been contained therein. That language policy was a determining factor in this rejection is supported by explicit evidence. Lone Wolf's recollection of one particular incident attests to this fact--as well as to the argument that the demarcations between support, resistance, and rejection were never clear or fixed. "I remember

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[34]Lame Deer and Erdoes, *Lame Deer,* 35.

[35]*ARCIA*, 1884, 111, as cited in Priest, *Stepchildren,* 243.

[36]Coleman, *School,* 174.

one evening when we were all lined up in a room and one of the boys said something in Indian to another boy. The man in charge of us pounced on the boy, caught him by the shirt, and threw him across the room. Later we found out that his collar bone was broken."[37] The boy's father promptly removed him from school.

To the government's attempts to assimilate them through compulsory education in general and the language policies in particular, Indians responded in diverse fashion. Some rejected out of hand all white education, others did so only after particularly distasteful or simply more direct experiences. Many on the opposite end of the spectrum courted aspects of education--some before possessing any firsthand experience, some even after initial opposition, and many even after extended periods in school. But a common theme--whether absolute rejection or qualified support represented the chosen perspective--permeated all Indian attitudes toward white education: the repudiation of their cultures was neither supported nor tolerated by Indians. Thus while one historian of Indian education could claim validly that he located no evidence of an Indian student regretting learning English, one must recognize the sentiments embodied in a former student's statement that "they told us that Indian ways were bad. They said we must get civilized. I remember that word, too. It

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[37]"Lone Wolf Returns," reprinted in Nabokov, *Testimony*, 220-21.

means 'be like the white man.' I am willing to be like the white man, but I did not believe Indian ways were wrong."[38]

Such resilient beliefs have significant implications for the United States government's Indian language policy. As demonstrated above, qualified Indian support for English language instruction was rather extensive; many Indian parents encouraged their children to learn the language of the white culture that surrounded them, and many children did so with enthusiasm. If one accepts such support as the mark of Indian sanction, then although the imposition of English was coercive, unyielding, paternalistic, and ethnocentric, it was not necessarily or entirely oppressive. However, the absolute prohibition of any use of Indian languages cannot be justified. Education in a second language certainly does not require the elimination of the first. In fact, such education may be facilitated using the native language as a tool of instruction. If the concern truly lay in bringing the English language to the Indians, then some degree of instruction in Indian languages should not only have been permitted, but encouraged. Yet no matter what the educational concerns of Indian instruction, the banning of any communication in Indian languages remains severe and unwarranted. As an unmitigated attempt to exterminate an aspect of Indian culture and as consistently opposed by even those Indians who advocated

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[38]Coleman, *School,* 184; Sun Elk quoted in Edwin R. Embree, *Indians of the Americas,* reprinted in Nabokov, *Testimony,* 221.

learning English, the ban must be acknowledged as sinister and reprehensible.

XI."CIVILIZATION DESTROYS THE INDIAN": LANGUAGE ASSIMILATION AS A PROGRAM OF EXTERMINATION

Ultimately, despite involving a professed desire to assimilate American Indians, United States Indian language policy was part of an education program primarily designed to eliminate Indian cultures--and thereby "vanish the Indian." The education of Indians as it was undertaken grew not out of generosity and benevolence, but out of apprehension: the development of the kind of centralized, standardized, coercive, and Protestant-led program of public schooling to which Indians found themselves subjected in the late nineteenth century was spawned by "a gut fear of the cultural divisiveness inherent in the increasing religious and ethnic diversity of American life."[1] According to this fear, cultural diversity represented not only deviance but menace. This perception of cultural alternatives as a threat to the white, essentially Anglo-Saxon Protestant vision of American life created a

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[1]Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools,* 39. Illustrating a particularly revealing parallel, Katz discusses the prohibition of the German language in Pennsylvania public schools.

mind-set conducive to the formulation and implementation of an education system that sought to exterminate all vestiges of cultural alternatives--including all aspects of Indian cultures and specifically including Indian languages.

Everything that in white minds defined the image of the Indian came under siege. Meticulously inclusive, the program of cultural annihilation targeted every possible trait of Indian cultures. Indian subsistence practices had already been dramatically disrupted by, as in the case of the buffalo, the elimination of food sources, or by the often unscrupulous diminution of Indian lands. But the coherent assimilation program was more encompassing and more direct in its methods: Indian religions, deemed pagan and inferior by reformers, were subjected to a sectarian-led, government sanctioned program of conversion; the Dawes Act leveled an attack on the tribal system and communal land-holding; medicine men and traditional dances, celebrations, and marriage practices were among the cultural components prohibited by Indian policy regulations; schools sheared the long hair of Indian students and stripped them of their traditional Indian clothes; and a program of renaming Indians was undertaken by the government.

Indian languages were, of course, not exempt. Commissioner of Indian Affairs J.C.D. Atkins blithely argued that prohibiting Indian languages was no different than prohibiting the use of the "scalping knife" or tomahawk.[2] Yet language,

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[2]*ARCIA,* 1887, xxiii.

in the minds of reformers, represented a critical component of barbaric and therefore doomed Indian culture. As one Indian agent put it, "schools conducted in the vernacular are detrimental to civilization. They encourage Indians to adhere to their time-honored customs and inherent superstitions which the government has in every way sought to overcome, and which can only be accomplished by adopting uniform rules requiring instruction in the English language exclusively."[3] Such a statement not only asserted the importance of language to achieving assimilationist policy objectives, but also revealed the true objectives themselves.

If Indians were not going to wither and die in the face of white culture--a long-held but imminently moribund perception--then whites advocated manipulating that culture as a tool to completely eliminate the perceived threat to the status quo that Indian cultures represented. Through white education, "Indianness" would be extinguished. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan supported this endeavor, insisting that Indians "must stand or fall as men and women, not as Indians."[4] By implication, Indians would be neither fully civilized nor fully human until the replacement of their cultures. Similar sentiments echoed abundantly across the field of reform, as the public demanded "that

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[3]Ibid., xxiv.

[4]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 11.

Indians . . . become white men in one generation."[5] In actuality, such statements clamored not for granting Indians full admission into white culture, but for effectively transforming them into non-Indians. Both the intent and the impatience behind the attempt to completely eradicate Indian cultures found expression in the words of one concerned reformer who wondered "why we cannot absorb two hundred and fifty thousand Indians into our millions and never know where they are."[6] Thus the solution to the "Indian Problem"--resolved according to the adage "out of sight, out of mind"--lay in the elimination of all visible manifestations of Indian cultures.

Other alternatives existed. Only decades after such extreme cultural intolerance found expression in the concerted program of ostensible assimilation, the federal government's Indian New Deal of the 1930s endeavored to realign Indian education policy according to tenets of cultural pluralism, including encouraging the preservation and use of Indian languages.[7] But late nineteenth century Indian education did

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[5]*ARCIA*, 1881, xxxiv.

[6]Frances Campbell Sparhawk, "The Indian's Yoke," *North American Review*, CLXXXIII, (Jan. 1906), 50, as cited in Dippie, *Vanishing,* 180.

[7]Led by Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier and involving such measures as the Wheeler-Howard (Indian Reorganization) Act, the Indian New Deal addressed problems and presented significant reforms in all realms of Indian Affairs, including culture, landholding, education, and legal rights. The central principles of this heightened concern for Indian well-being were a respect for Indian cultures and a commitment

not represent a misguided attempt to share with Indians the finest attributes of white American culture. Instead, education in white culture was utilized deliberately as the wedge by which to separate Indians from their traditional cultures.

Furthermore, the catch-word of the entire program--assimilation--is markedly inaccurate. If one takes the term to denote the cultivation of similarity, then its application to Indian education remains partially legitimate: through the forced substitution of white American culture for traditional Indian cultures, reformers hoped to make Indians less dissimilar from themselves by making them less "Indian." Yet if the definition of assimilation is extended to include notions of complete absorption and incorporation--the definition asserted by reformers themselves--then designating education efforts as assimilationist is invalid.[8] Despite the din of declarations contending that complete assimilation was the ultimate aim of educating Indians in white culture, definite limits upon the extent of accepting them into white society were recognized. By not granting United States citizenship to all Indians born in the country until 1924 and by allowing the prohibition of Indian suffrage until as late as 1948 in Arizona and 1962 in

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to uphold Indian self-determination.

[8]In a representative example of assimilationist rhetoric, Thomas Morgan called for "the complete education and absorption into the national life of those who for more than one hundred years have been among us, but not of us." Morgan, *Indian Education,* 20.

New Mexico, the government neglected components central to the realization of true and thorough assimilation.[9]

The issue of racial intermixture between whites and Indians also disclosed the real intent behind the veil of assimilation. Although white reformers sought to make Indians culturally indistinguishable from themselves, most certainly never advocated crossing perceived biological boundaries. Arguing that "many people naturally viewed intermarriage with . . . dread" and that most reformers did not exhibit "enthusiasm" regarding miscegenation, Priest referred to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis A. Walker's particular preference for extermination over intermarriage.[10] Philip C. Garrett, a lawyer and member of the executive committee of the Indian Rights Association, stated that he did "not recommend the intermingling of the races," and that he believed most whites would be intelligent enough to avoid interracial sexual relations and thereby "avert the nightmare of a confusion of races or the degradation of the Caucasian by either Indian or African infusion."[11] Notwithstanding the popularity and prevalence of assimilation rhetoric, the physical distinctions

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[9]Dates cited in Dippie, *Vanishing,* 196.

[10]Francis A. Walker, *The Indian Question,* (Boston; 1884), 94, as cited in Priest, *Stepchildren,* 147.

[11]"Indian Citizenship," *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Lake Mohonk Conferences* (1884), 8-11, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 61, 62.

between whites and Indians were to be maintained.[12]

Americanization had its definite and substantial legal qualifications, assimilation its biological restrictions. Therefore the terms "Americanization" and "assimilation" were

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[12]The staunch and impassioned opposition to racial intermixture should be understood as to some extent reflecting popular, although waning, anthropological concepts of the mid to late nineteenth century. Grounded in the theory of polygenism--that different races were created separately and with distinct qualities and capabilities--many Americans firmly believed, with legitimate scientific opinions to support them, that Indians were a biologically separate and inferior race. It is no wonder, then, that most whites viewed intermixture with some dread.

However, there were white Americans advocating racial intermixture. None other than prominent and progressive ethnologist Lewis Henry Morgan encouraged miscegenation. This encouragement reflected both scientific beliefs and a social agenda. First of all, Morgan's perspective involved a hearty dose of biological determinism; to Morgan, culture was in large measure a factor of biology. His belief in the Enlightenment principles of equality and progress and in the rejuvenated theory of monogenism, however, required that he shape his notions of biological determinism to his encompassing belief in the essential equality of man. Thus, Morgan argued that the inferior Indians could be uplifted to a position of equality with whites through intermixture: "the only way to tame [the Indians] is to put in the white blood." (Cited in Bieder, *Science,* 225.)

Morgan's objective involved more than acculturating or "elevating" Indians through racial intermixture. Morgan, like other reformers, believed that Indian cultures would, through assimilationist efforts, be replaced by white culture. His aim, however, was more insidious in light of its desired results. Although truly benevolently intended, Morgan's encouragement of racial intermixture was designed not only to eliminate Indian cultures, but also to physically eliminate Indians. Through the progressive dilution of Indian blood that would attend intermixture with the vastly more numerous whites, Indians, in Morgan's view, would eventually be overwhelmed--and effectively "vanished."

While there were, then, reformers proposing racial intermixture, such a perspective represented a minor and fringe element. Furthermore, advocating intermixture did not necessarily alter the true objectives of assimilation. Instead, the kind of assimilation proposed by Morgan promised a more thorough elimination of Indians.

at best euphemisms used to disguise the true objective of the language policies: cultural extermination.

In its 1880 annual report, the Board of Indian Commissioners rather ruefully acknowledged two crucial facts regarding the state of Indian affairs: Indians were surviving and policies of genocide were increasingly unacceptable.

> The Indian population taken as a whole, instead of dying out under the light and contact of civilization, as has been generally supposed, is steadily increasing. The Indian is evidently destined to live as long as the white race, or until he becomes absorbed and assimilated with his pale brethren. We hear no longer advocated among really civilized men the theory of extermination.[13]

Thus those concerned with the fate of the enduring Indian population turned their energies toward education and its more acceptable form of extermination--cultural "assimilation." Besides, as succinctly put by the Reverend Lyman Abbott, "it costs less to educate an Indian than it does to shoot him."[14]

Yet military confrontations with Indians and the cultural conflict within Indian education are less distinct than they might appear. In fact, Prucha asserted that "the conscious goal of both military and civilian officials" during Indian wars was "the destruction of the Indians' traditional way of

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[13]*Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners* (1880), 7-9, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 193.

[14]*Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (1888), 11-16, reprinted in Prucha, *Americanizing,* 212.

life"--not physical extermination.[15] Although the methods shifted from those of forced marches and cavalry charges to those of forced school attendance and blows with brass studded rulers, cultural extermination by means of education represented not a dramatic change in policy objectives, but a continuation. Substantial military involvement in Indian education--barracks were converted into instructional facilities and military officials themselves engaged in administration and teaching--attests to the veracity of this assertion. Similarly, the fact that Captain Richard Henry Pratt--a veteran of the Indian Wars who accompanied Apache prisoners of war first to Fort Marion, Florida, and then to the Hampton Institute--became the father of the Indian education program further demonstrates the connection between military and education concerns.

Moreover, military and education approaches both framed the "Indian Problem" in terms of an elemental dichotomy of extinction and subjugation. In confrontations with Indians, the military was utilized to impose white interests. If fatalities occurred, they were seen by whites merely as the inevitable and unfortunate result of futile Indian resistance to unyielding white civilization. Education of the Indians displayed the same duality. For many assimilationist reformers, there was no middle ground: Indians had to be forced to adopt white civilization or face extinction. Even the seminal

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[15]Prucha, *Great Father,* 549.

Civilization Fund had laid this out concisely, prescribing the means to provide "against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes . . . and for introducing among them the habits and arts of civilization."[16]

Ultimately, the goal of both military and educational conflicts with Indians was control. The United States hoped through war or school to subordinate the Indian population and eliminate the sources and sustenance of continued Indian defiance. In fact, assimilation represented the coalescence of military and education efforts to control Indians. This is especially demonstrated by the evidence that the military and the government both explicitly encouraged the selection of students for Carlisle from tribes and families most likely to cause trouble, a tactic intended to extort good behavior from those Indians whose children attended the distant white boarding schools.[17]

In this concerted effort to control Indians, reformers demanded that traditional Indian ways of life go the way of the thousands of Indian warriors and non-combatants who had been killed in conflicts with whites. Furthermore, as in the

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[16]*United States Statutes at Large, Vol. III,* 516-17, as cited in Fletcher, *Education,* 163.

[17]Eastman, *Pratt*, 78; and *Report of the Secretary of the Interior,* 1882, xvii, and *CIA Report* 1880, vii, as cited in George R. McMullen, "Federal Policy in Indian Education, 1870-1938," 27-28, 28 n. 19. The extortionist intent behind the selection of Indian pupils was recognized by the Indians themselves. *CIA Report* 1900, 33, as cited in McMullen, "Federal," 40.

case of military conflict, education involved dangling the sword of physical extermination over Indian heads. The rhetoric of conquest remained intact. Thus Thomas J. Morgan threatened that "Indians must conform to 'the white man's ways' . . . or be crushed by [them]."[18] Nowhere is the direct relationship between survival and acceptance of white domination more clearly insisted upon than in the act authorizing the withholding of subsistence rations from Indians whose children did not attend school.[19] In the equation laid out by reformers, adoption of white culture equaled survival; resistance was tantamount to courting extinction.

In terms of this threat of physical extermination, assimilation brought nothing new to Indian policy. Indian resistance to whites always involved the risk of death, whether military or education tactics represented the preferred means of imposing white interests. In the case of assimilation, however, even full Indian acquiescence promised a form of annihilation. This was not true of military confrontations between whites and Indians. If Indians accepted white demands, military conflict was usually avoided. Furthermore, military approaches allowed those Indians who were subdued to continue practicing much of their traditional cultures--and thereby to preserve and perpetuate Indian

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[18]*ARCIA,* 1889, 3.

[19]27 Stat. 612, 628, 25 Congress, 283, as cited in Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Law*, 119.

identity. Assimilation was designed to do precisely the opposite: efforts to indoctrinate Indians in white culture were intended to obliterate Indian cultures, eliminate Indian identity, and thereby effectively eliminate Indians. Senator Ingalls of Kansas expressed both the hope and intent of the new emphasis of Indian policy, declaring "civilization destroys the Indian."[20] Seen in this light, assimilation represented a more sinister and inimical policy than a strictly military one.

Ironically, even the most truculent expression of intimidation and hostility toward Indians and Indian cultures often entailed ascension to the heights of professed benevolence and paternalism. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Nathaniel Taylor declared that whites would "soon crush [Indians] out from the face of the earth, unless the humanity and Christian philanthropy of our enlightened statesmen shall interfere and rescue them."[21] The oft-pugnacious Commissioner Morgan believed that educating Indians was simply the virtuous path for white civilization to select "in dealing with those whom it might easily crush, but whom it is far nobler to adopt as a part of its great family."[22] Such beliefs--rampant in

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[20]*Congressional Record IV,* 3953, as cited in Priest, *Stepchildren,* 243.

[21]Letter to W.T. Otto, July 12, 1867, *Senate Executive Document* no. 13, 40 Congress, 1 session, serial 1308, 5-6, as cited in Prucha, *Great Father,* 488.

[22]Morgan, *Indian Education,* 20.

the dialogue of late nineteenth century Indian policy reform--denied the profound Indian strength to successfully resist assimilation and assert their own interests, and also further inflated the ethnocentrism of whites. Yet the statements of both Taylor and Morgan serve as concise characterizations of the sentiments upon which the Indian language policies were founded: backed by the threat of the United States government and military, reformers forged an education program intended to eliminate all that to them was Indian and, under the flag of benevolence, labeled it the Indians' best interest.

There were those reformers who recognized the harmful ramifications of the language policies for Indians. But most--like Taylor and Morgan--genuinely believed in the benevolence of teaching Indians to practice white culture exclusively, even if that required severe measures of coercion. For all reformers engaged in defining Indian policy, however, the immediate objective of the language policies remained the extermination of Indian languages and the substitution of English. Whatever grievances or tributes Indians might in the future utter regarding life in the United States would have to come in the language of their white neighbors. For reformers looked with impatience toward that time in the not so distant future when they could look upon the individual Indian--distinguishable only by the color of his skin--as he sat on the front porch of his little house on his small plot of land, hands tucked into the pockets of his

trousers, dreaming, it was hoped, of working hard and acquiring more private property--and expressing such longings in the familiar sounds of English.

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