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## AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Russell Thornton

American Indian studies is the endogenous consideration of traditional and contemporary Indian societies located in the Western Hemisphere.

It was several hundred years ago that the system of higher education in the United States commenced with the founding of Harvard, William and Mary, Dartmouth, and other institutions to educate Indian and non-Indian youth of this land.<sup>1</sup> During ensuing centuries, these colleges and the over two thousand that came later concentrated on the education of non-Indians. The education of Indians occurred in missions schools,<sup>2</sup> in schools Indian peoples themselves established,<sup>3</sup> and in government and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools,<sup>4</sup> but seldom in these colleges and universities.<sup>5</sup> In the last decade, however, the national system of higher education sought to return partially to its original mandate to enfranchise American Indians within its realm by recruiting and admitting increased numbers of Indian students.<sup>6</sup>

Concomitant with this renewed mandate was a realization that it is both legitimate and desirable to include the endogenous consideration of American Indian societies and concerns as an important and pervasive activity within academia.<sup>7</sup> As a method of accomplishing this, a myriad of Indian studies programs were created in colleges and universities.<sup>8</sup> The creation of these programs is in contrast to the history of most existing disciplines. The typical historical pattern is that first came the discipline as an intellectual entity, that is, as a distinct body of knowledge and interests; then came its development as a structural entity, that is, as faculties, courses, programs of study, degrees, and departments.<sup>9</sup> The structural entity of American Indian studies came several years ago. Its intellectual entity at that time was not distinct, but merely a loose composite of existing academic disciplines (most notably anthropology, law, and history of Indian cultures, especially their language, art, and music) and of

contemporary issues and problems of Indian peoples.

Today, American Indian studies is only slightly beyond this initial point.<sup>10</sup> It has not yet embraced fully the higher order scholarly and academic functions of the contemporary university system. The development of American Indian studies has been characterized by a concentration on teaching and service activities, not on scholarly ones characteristic of other disciplines. Consequently, American Indian studies is only really a quasi-discipline and its existence as a separate area within academia therefore problematic.

This paper addresses the disciplinary nature and possibilities of American Indian studies, issues which seemingly are important to its existence as a distinct entity within the academic system. The discussion is accomplished through the format of examining American Indian studies in light of some disciplinary criticisms leveled against it and suggesting some possible directions it might follow.

### The Disciplinary Nature of American Indian Studies

In order to discuss the disciplinary nature of American Indian studies, it would be desirable if an explicit and consensual set of criteria for a discipline was available. If such were the case, it would be possible to assess systematically how American Indian studies conforms to these criteria. Unfortunately I know of no set of criteria in the scholarly literature of any area, though a number of relatively general discussions of disciplines, how they have emerged and how they are now located in the system of higher education, may be readily located.<sup>11</sup> In spite of this lacuna, American Indian studies has been criticized as nondisciplinary, even undisciplinary. Unfortunately also no systematic critique of American Indian studies as a discipline is to be found in the literature.<sup>12</sup> Criticisms of it in this regard have often occurred, only less formally, in the everyday discourse of the academic system, by faculty, by administrators, by students.<sup>13</sup> Though few of these criticisms have found their way into scholarly literature, they seem important and may operate to influence development of American Indian studies in specific situations.

The lack of a clear and precise definition of a discipline and the informal nature of disciplinary criticisms of American Indian studies preclude the desirable rigorous and systematic assessment of American Indian studies as a

discipline at this time. What is possible, however, and what shall be accomplished here is a discussion of American Indian studies vis-a-vis established disciplines in academia regarding some of its generally mentioned, though often only vaguely referred to, disciplinary shortcomings. For ease of discussion, I have categorized these shortcomings as a distinct methodology, abstract concepts, unique area of concern, and scholarly traditions.

*Distinct methodology.* A criticism often directed at American Indian studies is that it lacks a distinct methodology. There are those who argue that disciplines have distinct methodologies; American Indian studies does not have one and cannot therefore be considered a discipline.

It seems relatively clear that there is one set of principles underlying all academic disciplines: the principles of objectivity, empiricism, and logic.<sup>14</sup> These same principles govern activities of the disciplines of the humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences and are used as much by the literary scholar as by the chemist. Operating within these basic principles are a variety of methodological procedures, apparatus, and techniques. While some disciplines may have exclusive use of some of these, many firmly established in academia do not.

Natural sciences, with perhaps the exception of astronomy, use the classical experimental procedure though none can make an exclusive claim to it. All have a variety of means for collecting information, for example, electron microscopes, telescopes, and various meters and other sensing devices. Some of these may be more or less exclusive to particular disciplines; others, such as the thermometer, are surely not.

The humanities are not characterized by distinct procedures, apparatus, or techniques, so obviously specific disciplines within this grouping are not either. They do have traditions of scholarship (a topic to be discussed later), and there are philosophical dialogues in philosophy, and of course all operate on the basis of objectivity, empiricism, and logic.

The social sciences have some relatively distinct methods of collecting data, a few of which may be used exclusively by one discipline, but most of which are not. Within what may be called the social sciences in the broadest sense, experimental psychology uses the classical experimental procedure extensively, but it is a procedure shared with the natural sciences

and occasionally with other social sciences, for example, sociology. It also has elaborate and relatively unique techniques and apparatus for collecting information from and about animals and humans, techniques and apparatus analogous to those of the natural sciences, for example, experimental chambers ("Skinner boxes"), T-mazes, signal detection. History in many ways is a methodological procedure with its techniques of historical research, techniques shared, however, with the humanities—such as classics—and with sister social sciences—such as sociology.<sup>15</sup>

Other social sciences seem very similar in their methodologies. Many early procedures came from anthropology, for example, the field method, participant observation; though today sociology probably stands as the discipline having generated the majority of methodological procedures and techniques used. (It should be pointed out, however, that sociology owes its methodological development initially to anthropology and economics and that some sociologists are now learning techniques of historical research.) These range from small group research techniques and questionnaire construction (developed by both psychology and sociology) to procedures for survey research and multivariate analysis, ethnomethodology, and sampling. They are used by anthropologists, historians, psychologists, geographers, economists, and political scientists.

American Indian studies does not have a distinct and unique set of methodological procedures, techniques, or apparatus. It uses various means of collecting and analyzing information, means shared with a variety of other disciplines.<sup>16</sup> These range from techniques of literary scholarship through historical analysis to social science methodologies. American Indian studies is involved in the development of methodological techniques and procedures for collecting and analyzing oral data, but it is a development shared with history, anthropology, and Afro-American studies among other disciplines.

A criticism of American Indian studies as undisciplinary because of this lack of a distinct methodology is a criticism that could be made of many, if not all, existing disciplines. To direct this criticism at American Indian studies and not at virtually all existing disciplines is to apply more stringent methodological criteria to American Indian studies than to other disciplines. To do so is to be incongruent with principles of academia.

*Unique, abstract concepts.* Another important set of issues raised concerning the integrity of American Indian studies as an academic discipline refers to its lack of unique, abstract concepts. It is asserted in these criticisms that disciplines consist of such concepts and that American Indian studies is decidedly lacking in them.

It seems valid certainly that, as examples, physics is considered a discipline in part because it examines the physical world and relationships in it through unique, abstract concepts such as gravity, force, and mass, and psychology because it studies individual organisms through concepts such as id, ego, and superego (if one is a Freudian) in the clinical branch and association, reinforcement, and reaction time in the experimental one. Even philosophy, I suppose the oldest discipline, has unique and abstract concepts of the Platonic ideal, reality, and beauty, and sociology ones of status equilibrium, norm, and those forming Parson's theory of action.

There are many other areas in academia that do not have concepts of this order, however. Astronomy, it would seem, uses those of physics, and, as is the case with methodologies, many social sciences borrow from sociology, for example, use of social class in political science and urban geography or role in psychology and anthropology (where its basic formulations developed).

Many endeavors do not really utilize unique, abstract concepts. This seems the case with area studies such as American studies, Latin American studies, Russian studies, Chinese studies, East Asian studies. It is also the case with many humanities. I know of no unique, abstract concepts in classics or in English or other languages. The same may be said of many social sciences. Concepts of this order are often not used in geography or political science, and history does not have them, though it does produce history by explaining and interpreting chronological events. These areas are, however, important in the academic system, and quite properly so.<sup>17</sup>

American Indian studies does not possess any particularly unique, abstract concepts as it now exists. Common words provide, for the moment at least, sufficient language for undertaking intellectual endeavors, be they, for example, reexamination of Indian history or discussion of contemporary events. It does not seem imperative that American Indian studies develop its own conceptual schemes to advance

knowledge. A lexicon of unique, abstract concepts seems a possible product of the intellectual endeavors of a discipline, not a prerequisite for its existence.

*Legitimate area of concern.* A third comment on American Indian studies addressed here is that it does not constitute a legitimate area within the academic system. The argument is made that disciplines constitute separate areas of concern, that is, each examines totally distinct phenomena. The study of American Indians, however, can occur within the framework of existing disciplines, most notably anthropology (where it has occurred in the past) but also such other social sciences as history and sociology, and humanities such as English, art, and music and to have American Indian studies as a separate area is redundant.

This argument as it pertains to disciplines generally seems valid in one sense, invalid in another.

As academia has developed, it has organized primarily along lines of either separate areas of concern or separate approaches to the same general area, but sometimes both. In other words, areas of concern and approaches to areas (in the form of methodologies and concepts discussed above) seem legitimate ways of demarcating disciplines, though they are not perfect ways.

To a large extent, chemists and physicists study different areas in different ways, and their disciplines are distinct because they do. Astronomy uses basically the same approach as physics but focuses on some different phenomena and exists separately because of this. The same may be said of the languages. All have basically the same approach but each focuses on a different area, that is, language. In many respects, however, social sciences have the same areas of concern but approach them in different ways. Sociologists study political systems and economics, as do political scientists and economists. Historians study all of these, but in ways somewhat unique. Lines of demarcation here occur not only because of what area is studied, but also because of the way it is studied.

The idea that established disciplines could study American Indians is noteworthy. There is no reason why they could not or should not. It would be enlightening to have Indian history considered in history departments, Indian political systems in political science departments, Indian literature and oral traditions in English departments, Indian art in art departments, In-

dian music in music departments, and so forth. With the exception of anthropology, however, traditional areas of higher education have neglected American Indians though these areas could have undoubtedly learned much by examining them.

However, the argument that the study of American Indians need not exist as a separate area is tenuous in two regards.

First, American Indian studies is the endogenous consideration of American Indians, that is, the study of American Indians originating from inside Indian cultures, not the exogenous one. Problems and issues of the internal versus the external approach to studying peoples have been given much attention in the scholarly literature of some areas in recent years.<sup>18</sup> This controversy may be summarized simply by asserting that both are likely insightful for different purposes, and both are legitimate approaches to studying phenomena.

Until the formulation of Indian studies a few years ago, American Indians had been considered basically from an external perspective.<sup>19</sup> Now, however, with the advent of American Indian studies, other insights on these cultures and peoples are possible. The claim that American Indian studies is endogenous, with respect to the perspective used and often who is using the perspective,<sup>20</sup> represents a unique examination of American Indians.<sup>21</sup> I doubt if any scholar examining American Indians endogenously, whether that person be Indian or not, would observe Indian civilizations as primitive or savage.

Second, American Indian studies considers various components of Indian societies together, not fragmented by existing disciplines. All area studies exist in part for this reason—to bring together perspectives from various traditional disciplines on an area of common concern.<sup>22</sup> It is perhaps commonplace but nevertheless true that the real world does not operate along disciplinary lines of academia, and while it may be important to separate out components of the world to study them, it appears necessary to bring them together to understand them.

American Indian studies has an additional claim to make here. Unlike contemporary societies of western Europe and the United States, American Indian societies represent basically undifferentiated systems.<sup>23</sup> Various subsystems of western Europe and the United States—the familial, religious, economic, political, and educational subsystems—are relatively sepa-

rate from one another. These subsystems in Indian societies are not. They are, in contrast, closely related to and fused with one another, with familial, religious, economic, political, and educational activities occurring basically together. There is, for example, no separation of church and state in traditional Indian societies. It may be possible to get a fairly good sense of Britain, the United States, Russia, and Canada by examining parts of them in isolation, but it is not possible to do this for any American Indian society. (This is likely more crucial when one attempts to obtain an endogenous picture of these societies, for they are interrelated to those living in them.)

There is a final issue to be considered here, one chosen to be examined separately from the above context. This is the argument that American Indians do not exist uniquely in the United States,<sup>24</sup> but are only one part of American society and therefore may be included within American studies, an existent and well-developed area within academia. This argument does not seem particularly meritorious.

An important point of American Indian studies is that American Indians are quite distinct from the American population and American Indian societies are quite distinct from American society. Attempts to absorb Indian societies over the past several centuries have not succeeded, and, in fact, Indian societies have in the past few years been revitalized through increased tribal strength in reservation and rural areas and through pan-Indianism in urban ghettos. Also, it should be noted, American Indians are the only group in American society that have a special legal status. To place American Indian studies under the rubric of American studies, or vice versa, would destroy the uniqueness of each and would be analogous to placing Chinese studies under Latin American studies.<sup>25</sup>

American Indian studies can thus be said to have as legitimate an area of concern as any discipline. It represents consideration of peoples and cultures not traditionally within the purview of other disciplines. Of perhaps more crucial importance, American Indian studies as an area study, is seemingly a means whereby American Indian cultures may be understood in ways heretofore not possible.

*Intellectual traditions.* A final generally referred to characteristic of a discipline observed lacking in American Indian studies is a set of intellectual traditions. This seems a valid observation.

There are distinct methodological procedures, techniques, and apparatus, unique, abstract concepts, and distinct content areas within academia, and these can be used to characterize and partition disciplines. But as has been illustrated, lines of demarcation are not clear and specific disciplines need not be characterized by any particular one of these, or even by any at all.

What are needed for separate disciplines in academia, however, are unique intellectual pursuits.

Intellectual pursuits are needed as they seem the defining characteristic of the academic system in our society<sup>26</sup> and thus the basis for inclusion of a discipline within this system. The method of intellectual pursuit need not be through a distinct methodology, though it must conform to the principles of objectivity, empiricism, and logic. Neither need it be through abstract, unique conceptual schemes, though it must be oriented toward generation of knowledge. Unique intellectual pursuits are needed, virtually by definition, for if an area is not unique there is no reason for it to be separate.

Political science, as an example, exists in the academic system because of its intellectual pursuits. It exists as a separate discipline from sociology neither because it has a content area different from sociology (the political system is one part of a society) nor because it possesses abstract concepts different from sociology nor because it utilizes methodologies that sociology does not. It exists as a separate discipline because its intellectual pursuits are different from those of sociology.

American Indian studies has developed along three basic lines since its inception. One, it has developed along the line of Indian culture; that is, it has introduced Indian languages, music, art, literature, and ways of looking at the world into academia. Two, it has developed along social science lines; that is, it has attempted to consolidate existing bodies of knowledge pertaining to American Indians in the social sciences, most notably anthropology and history, and also evaluate and reinterpret this knowledge. Three, Indian studies has developed along applied lines. It has examined Indian education, Indian social work, Indian health care and has attempted to make these areas more relevant to problems and conditions of Indian peoples.

There seems little doubt that these activities have been needed and are important. How-

ever, they represent (more probably because of the way they have been conducted rather than inherently) basically teaching and service activities, not research or scholarly ones. Moreover, they represent the confrontation of issues coming from outside the bounds of American Indian studies, not the articulation of unique issues. They represent attempts to teach Indian culture in ways compatible with the academic system, on the one hand, and with Indian peoples and cultures as they existed and now exist, on the other hand. They represent attempts, primarily through teaching, to react to existing and continuing work in the social sciences, to make views on American Indians contained in these disciplines more accurate and, occasionally, as the case in history, present the Indian's point of view. They represent the service attempt to deal with various problems faced by Indian peoples in rural, reservation, and urban areas, to disseminate information from academia to these peoples, and to convey these peoples' problems to those in academia who might give insight to their solution.

These efforts do not, however, represent development of intellectual integrity for American Indian studies and therefore do not further its advancement as an academic discipline. (They may, however, contribute to and provide a partial foundation for its advancement as a discipline.) What is needed for this to occur is the self-definition of issues and foci for American Indian studies to examine, consider, and build intellectual traditions around. This has yet to be accomplished.

Part of the needed direction lies in simply becoming oriented to the research function of the academic system. I am not attacking teaching and service activities of American Indian studies; on the contrary, I strongly support them. I am pointing out that research activities must also be conducted if American Indian studies is to exist as an area in academia. The other part of the needed direction lies in generating new intellectual problems. This also seems necessary if American Indian studies is to flourish as a separate discipline. Without this uniqueness, the argument that American Indian studies need exist separately is tenuous.

American Indian studies has received criticism as to its disciplinary nature and, by implication, as to its legitimacy within colleges and universities. Much of this criticism does not seem valid in cognizance of the nature and activities of established disciplines. The observation that American Indian studies does not

have a clearly defined unique intellectual integrity and other areas does appear valid. However, this does not seem an inherent limitation, rather a state of affairs that may be overcome through concentrated effort. I see no reason why American Indian studies does not have the potential of major intellectual contributions.<sup>27</sup>

### **Toward Intellectual Concerns**

A central issue thus facing full disciplinary attainment of American Indian studies is establishment of unique intellectual areas. As might be well imagined, this is not an easy task, nor one that may be accomplished quickly. It seems imperative, however, that American Indian studies accomplish this task if it is to flourish in higher education.

As a step toward this accomplishment, outlined and discussed here are some intellectual areas that seem within the mandate of American Indian studies but not already developed elaborately by other disciplines. These are not meant to be all inclusive as other equally sound areas could be formulated; neither are they meant to be specific research topics as they are very general. They represent only suggestions, possibilities derived in part from teaching and service activities already established by American Indian studies, unique characteristics of Indian societies, and trends of Indian peoples.

*Oral traditions.* The first area is oral traditions. Until fairly recently, Indian societies were totally oral societies with no form of written language (except pictographs). Even today, when most Indian languages now being used have a written form, oral communication is important in preserving and transmitting Indian cultures. This stands in marked contrast to larger societies' extensive (though certainly not total) reliance on written words.

An important area of concern within Indian studies as a discipline could pertain to issues revolving around these oral traditions. Though work has been done in this area by scholars outside Indian studies, for example, folklorists, anthropologists, oral historians, literary scholars, its potentialities remain vast and basically underdeveloped. The modern university system is built around and continues to function primarily through written words.<sup>28</sup> American Indian studies has the possibility of making a major contribution to and extension of the university system by exploring oral traditions and communications, perhaps even to the extent western knowledge systems have explored written communications. Included here could

be considerations of not only the content of these traditions but also how they change and diffuse, their similarities and variations from group to group, and research techniques for collecting and evaluating them.

*Treaties and treaty rights.* Another area of concern of American Indian studies might be treaties and treaty rights. In large measure, this has developed already within American Indian studies as broadly defined. For example, the Institute for the Development of Indian Law in Washington, D.C., considers treaty issues, and work is under way on treaties and treaty rights at the American Indian Studies Center at UCLA and in several law schools, particularly those with programs for Indian students. This area represents an extremely important set of issues facing Indian peoples today, as evidenced by this variety of applied and scholarly work.

American Indian studies as a discipline could become involved more extensively in this work. It could contribute further to the reexamination of the treaty basis of the contemporary situation of various Indian peoples, the main thrust to what is now being done. More important for its development as a discipline, it could develop sets of other issues. Included here could be an examination of the social determinants as to whether specific treaties were honored. It is obvious that many treaties were not kept, but it is far from apparent what were the conditions that brought about change in treaties at particular points in time. Also included here could be historical changes in interpretation of these treaties, both by Indian people and the U.S. government, and what social forces were associated with these changes. Still another area might pertain to origins of the treaty form of relationship itself, for example, under what conditions do two groups find it necessary to formalize their relationship through explicit written agreements. It is by no means clear why treaties between certain Indian peoples and the U.S. government occurred when they did.

*Tribal government.* A third area is tribal government. This may be subdivided into considerations of traditional and contemporary forms of tribal government.

Though there is existing work in anthropology and history on traditional tribal government, a myriad of topics pertaining to it are available for examination within American Indian studies. As but one example, people talk about the possible impact of traditional tribal democracies on the form of democracy developed by larger American society, but this has

yet to be documented. This issue could be explored within the context of American Indian studies. Others such as the impact of U.S. democracy on tribal governments and the intricacies of dual governments used by many Indian groups (one for peace, one for war) also come to mind.

A focus on contemporary Indian governments might be even more fruitful and probably more exclusive to American Indian studies as there seems little interest here by scholars of other disciplines. A major topic might be the constitutional development and state of Indian peoples today. Though a few Indian peoples (e.g., Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw) have written constitutions and other governing documents dating well back into the nineteenth century, most developed these in the 1930s after the Indian Reorganization Act. Many Indian groups are only now developing written constitutions, and others are today revising existent ones.

A variety of issues pertaining to these constitutions are relatively unexplored. For example, the constitutions contain tremendous variation in membership requirements but not even a brief description of this is to be found in scholarly literature; and some Indian groups have constitutional rights not available to other Indian groups but we are ignorant as to how this happened and what are the wider legal implications of the incongruity.

*Forms of organization.* A fourth area could consider forms of organization, that is, the nature and pattern of social organization Indian peoples developed and still use today. Anthropologists have examined extensively the kinship organization of Indian peoples, and they along with historians have given some attention to tribal governments as discussed above, but other particular patterns are virtually unexplored.

An example of contributions American Indian studies could make by studying Indian forms of organization relates to nonbureaucracies. For the past hundred years or so, western societies have been characterized by large, formal organizations typically referred to as bureaucracies. The study of these organizations has occurred primarily within sociology, and in fact a founding father of sociology, Max Weber, developed the classic statement of bureaucracy.<sup>29</sup> More recently, attention has been devoted to nonbureaucratic forms of organization, forms thought to coincide with development of knowledge and subsequent importance of knowledge to organizations. These have

been referred to as "organizations of the future" and it has been asserted that they represent a new social phenomenon.<sup>30</sup>

On examining characteristics of these organizations, however, it is remarkable how similar they are to traditional forms of Indian organization and decision-making, forms still characteristic of Indian groups today. American Indian studies might examine these forms of organization and make as many contributions to their study and use as sociology has made to study and use of bureaucratic organizations.

*Group persistence.* A fifth area might be how groups persist over time. Many disciplines examine change, particularly change in groups, and a variety of ways of explaining and describing change have been developed. Though many disciplines have a decidedly static orientation, that is, they examine phenomena at only one point in time, and studies of organizational change consider the issue of resistance to change, how groups are able to remain the same has been relatively neglected.

Since European contact, American Indian societies have been subject to considerable pressures to change and become assimilated into larger society. By and large, Indian societies have resisted these pressures, with many still existing as relatively distinct social and cultural groups, though some were annihilated in the process and much change has occurred. We really do not know how this has happened. There are likely a variety of factors influencing the preservation of stability despite outside pressures to change. American Indian studies seems in a unique position to make scholarly contributions to this intellectual and practical problem.

*American Indian epistemology.* A sixth important area might be consideration of American Indian epistemology by examining the nature (including origins and limitations) of knowledge systems and beliefs of American Indian societies.

A recent issue of *Science* contained a statement by the wider scholarly community acknowledging its recognition of the legitimacy of American Indian science and taxonomies.<sup>31</sup> Associated issues could be pursued by American Indian studies. These issues could encompass treatments of science in these societies and their knowledge systems, ways of looking at the world, and other cognitive facets. They could also encompass ethical and value systems of Indian peoples, ones I think that depart somewhat from those familiar to larger Amer-

ican society, but ones larger American society might find enlightening.

*Contemporary issues.* A final area could pertain to contemporary issues.

It is clear that an important area of intellectual endeavor within American Indian studies could be the variety of current events, developments, and issues within the Indian segment of the population. (I suppose this area might be analogous to world affairs within political science.) Certainly American Indian studies is in an advantageous position to lend intellectual perspective and analysis to events occurring at any particular time. Possible topics here are limitless, ranging from teaching Indian languages in public schools to economic development on reservations to "termination" of federally recognized tribes.

*Other areas.* There are a variety of other areas American Indian studies might consider, areas falling clearly within its realm but shared more properly with other disciplines. Possibilities here include the history of Indian education in the United States (particularly the history of educational systems established by Indian peoples themselves), Indian ecology, the demography of the American Indian, and enumeration and classification of Indian groups on other than linguistic and cultural bases. Other possibilities pertain to analysis of literature (both popular and scholarly) on American Indians, the nature and conditions of stereotyping, and Indian social movements. Also it would be appropriate for Indian studies to maintain its orientation toward Indian languages and to continue to offer insights on social problems facing the Indian segment of society as well as on professional problems in education, social work, law, and medicine.

## Conclusions

The future of American Indian studies seems uncertain. It may continue as a quasidiscipline, dependent on the lay Indian community and traditional disciplines for its knowledge, and on other disciplines and ethnic or minority studies for its academic location. It may cease as a separate entity and be absorbed by existing disciplines, much as the mandate of early colleges to educate Indian youth was absorbed by their mandate to educate non-Indian youth. Or, it may emerge as an autonomous discipline of the academic system with as much intellectual integrity as any discipline.

There are undoubtedly a variety of factors which will influence the future of American In-

dian studies. There are political ones, there are financial ones, there are moral ones, and there are intellectual ones. How these will converge and which will be most determinant in years to come is not known. It seems probable that all will be influential, for the academic system is a political system, an economic system, and a moral system as well as an intellectual system.<sup>32</sup>

If American Indian studies does not emerge as an autonomous discipline, it will not be because it is inherently incapable of doing so, however. It will probably be either because it fails to develop intellectually or because of political, economic, or moral reasons imposed from outside.

## NOTES

1. There is a variety of works detailing the establishment and early development of the system of higher education in the United States. Some of them document the mandate various colleges had to educate American Indians; others do not. For a general history of this system giving little attention to the importance of American Indians in founding early colleges, see Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962); for one that does, see William W. Brickman, "American Higher Education in Historical Perspective," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 404 (November 1972):31-43. For general histories of American Indian education that discuss the relationship between American Indians and early development of colleges in this country, the reader is referred to Evelyn C. Adams, *American Indian Education* (Morningside Heights, N.Y.: King's Crown Press, 1946) for an almost "layman's" overview; and to Martha E. Layman, "A History of Indian Education in the United States" Diss., University of Minnesota, 1942) for an excellent, scholarly account. Histories of specific colleges attesting to their interest in education of American Indians are Samuel Eliot Morrison; *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935) and *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936); J.W. Randolph, *The History of the College of William and Mary 1660-1874* (Richmond, Va.: Randolph and English, 1874); Frederick Chase, *A History of Dartmouth College* (Cambridge, Mass.: J. Wilson and Son, 1891-1913); and Leon B. Richardson, *The History of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932). For some additional insights into the founding of Dartmouth College, the early college seemingly having the most proclaimed interest in Indian youth, see James D. McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932) and *Eleazar Wheelock* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1939).
2. Of course, missions and mission school were present both before and after establishment of colleges in what is now the United States. For accounts of missions and their early educational activities, see Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, 4 vols. (San Francisco: James H. Barry Co., 1905-915); Jerome

- V. Jacobsen, *Educational Foundations of the Jesuits in Sixteenth Century New Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938); John Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854* (New York: Edward Dunigan, 1855); and Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1896). A first-hand account of a later mission school in Indian Territory may be found in Henry C. Benson, *Life Among the Choctaw Indians and Sketches of the South-West* (Cincinnati: L. Swormstedt and A. Poe, 1860), though it conveys a very negative (and biased) view of American Indians.
3. Consideration of schools Indian peoples operated (sometimes in conjunction with a church, sometimes totally by themselves) may be found in H.W. Bryce, "About Some of our First Schools in the Choctaw Nation," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 6 (December 1928):36-367; Angie Debo, "Education in the Choctaw Country after the Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 10 (September 1932):383-91; Abraham E. Knepler, "Eighteenth Century Cherokee Educational Efforts," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 20 (March 1942):55-61; and Abraham E. Knepler, "Education of the Cherokee Nation," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 21 (December 1943):378-401. It is suggested the interested reader see also Carolyn Foreman, "The Choctaw Academy," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 6 (December 1928):452-80; 9 (December 1931):382-411; 10 (March 1932):77-114; and *The Constitution and Laws of the Cherokee Nation, 1839-51* (Park Hill, I.T.: Cherokee Nation, 1852), *passim*.
  4. A history of governmental and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools concentrating on the period 1928-1973 may be found in Margaret Szasz, *Education and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974). See also Davida Woerner, "Education among the Navajo: An Historical Study" Diss., Columbia University, 1941) for an excellent account of the educational history of the Navajo, much of which involves government schools.
  5. As an example, Dartmouth College enrolled only twenty-eight Indians, nine of whom graduated, from its original founding until 1965. See "Dartmouth College," in Jeanette Henry, ed., *The American Indian Reader: Education* (San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, Inc., 1972), pp. 74-75.
  6. Despite increased numbers of American Indians enrolled in colleges and universities in recent years, little change in the percentage of the Indian population who have completed four or more years of college has occurred. For example, a comparison of the 1960 and 1970 census data shows that only slightly over 1 percent more Indians had completed college in 1970 than in 1960 (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census*, vol. 3: *American Indians*, HEW Publication No. 75-122, pp. 38-48).
  7. Among other rationale behind these programs are that they are helpful in attracting Indian students to college and in providing cultural support during the educational process. See, for example, Frank C. Miller, "Involvement in an Urban University," in Jack O. Waddell and O. Michael Watson, eds., *The American Indian in Urban Society* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), pp. 312-340.
  8. See *ibid.* for a case study of the creation of one of these—the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota—in 1969. A 1974 survey of these programs may be found in Patricia Locke, *A Survey of College and University Programs for American Indians* (Boulder, Colo.: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1974).
  9. For a general discussion of development of disciplines and their emergence in higher education, see Talcott Parsons, "Unity and Diversity in the Modern Intellectual Disciplines: The Role of the Social Sciences," *Daedalus* 94 (Winter 1965):39-65; and Talcott Parsons and Gerald Platt, *The American University* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 111-16. For an analysis of the emergence of specific disciplines, see Joseph Ben-David, *Trends in American Higher Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 97-101 regarding development of statistics; and Robert Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, 1966) regarding sociology.
  10. A recent assessment of American Indian studies may be found in Wilcomb E. Washburn, "American Indian Studies: A Status Report," *American Quarterly* 27 (August 1975):263-74. For other issues concerning American Indian studies, see Beatrice Medicine, "The Anthropologist and American Indian Studies Programs," *The Indian Historian* 4 (Winter 1971):15-18, 63; and Morgan G. Otis, Jr., "A Native American Studies Program," *The Indian Historian* 9 (Winter 1976):14-18.
  11. See, for example, Parsons, "Unity and Diversity," for a discussion of all intellectual disciplines and Joseph Ben-David, *Trends*, for an insightful analysis of the emergence of statistics in the United States and Britain.
  12. Observations on American Indian studies have, however, been made in Washburn "American Indian Studies" and Murray L. Wax, "Cultural Pluralism, Political Power, and Ethnic Studies" (Unpublished paper, University of Kansas, 1972).
  13. They exist, it might be observed, as oral traditions of the academic system and not as written literature.
  14. Parsons, "Unity and Diversity," p. 40.
  15. History has been criticized in precisely this regard, i.e., that it exists as only a research technique, by J.H. Randall, Jr., "History and the Social Sciences," in P.P. Wiener, ed., *Readings in Philosophy of Science* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 310-25.
  16. Also, it can become problematic when a discipline or subarea becomes tied too closely to a particular methodology and forsakes other issues, as Lewis A. Coser, "Presidential Address: Two Methods in Search of a Substance," *American Sociological Review* 40 (February 1975):691-700 has illustrated regarding areas of sociology and psychology.
  17. In fact, too much concern with development of elaborate conceptual schemes can impede development of the understanding of phenomena by a discipline as has been discussed in Russell Thornton, "Studying Society versus Studying Sociology," *Journal of Thought* 7 (July 1972):196-98.
  18. As an example of this literature, I call attention to Robert K. Merton, "Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (July 1972):9-47, though the focus is on "insiders" as members and "outsiders" as nonmembers, not on an "inside" or "outside" perspective to the study of a phenomenon.
  19. Of course, the endogenous analysis of a topic has generally been quite insightful when it has occurred, as evidenced by Alfonso Ortiz's *The Tewa World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969) in anthropology.
  20. Most faculty members in Indian studies programs are Indians themselves. Of the faculty listed in Locke, *A Survey*, the vast majority have tribal affiliations. (I list no fig-

- ures because some individuals listed have neither an Indian nor a non-Indian designation.)
21. After all, there are many facets of American culture that are best understood by Americans, though scholars from other countries might contribute unique insights on American society.
  22. As but one of myriad examples, the Department of Social Relations at Harvard was organized for this very reason. It has, however, split into separate departments of sociology, psychology, and anthropology since the retirement of Talcott Parsons. A Department of Social Relations continues to exist at Johns Hopkins University.
  23. This is often referred to as institutional fusion. For a more complete discussion of this pattern of societal organization, see Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1953), pp. 27–28; and Talcott Parsons, *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 21–25.
  24. Wax, "Cultural Pluralism."
  25. Also it could be argued that what has happened the past few hundred years on Indian land is but a small part of Indian history, and American society is a very young society in comparison to Indian ones. Accepting these arguments, perhaps American studies should be a sub-division of American Indian studies.
  26. See Parsons and Platt, *The American University*.
  27. American Indian studies might also have the potential of developing distinct methodology and a unique set of abstract concepts. As has been argued, however, this is not imperative for its development as a discipline and is therefore not discussed in this paper.
  28. Witness, for example, the view of the library as the "heart" of the university.
  29. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1964).
  30. Warren G. Bennis, *Changing Organizations* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), pp. 3–15.
  31. Janet W. Brown, "Native American Contributions to Science, Engineering and Medicine," *Science* 189 (July 1975):34–40, 70.
  32. It is interesting to note here that two distinguished universities have recently established chairs in area studies, each endowed by the respective countries. The University of Southern California received a \$1-million grant from Saudi Arabia to establish the King Faisal Chair of Islamic and Arab Studies (*Minneapolis Tribune*, 20 April 1976), and Harvard University received a \$1-million endowment from Australia to establish a chair of Australian studies (*Minneapolis Tribune*, 1 August 1976).