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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

D'Arcy McNickle: An Annotated Bibliography of His Published Articles and Book Reviews in a Biographical Context

DOROTHY R. PARKER

For forty years, D'Arcy McNickle wrote about Indians. His novel, *The Surrounded*, published in 1936, was the first of a variety of publications that marked his distinguished career in Indian affairs. Two more novels, several short stories, a biography, three historical monographs, and numerous articles and book reviews all reveal the extent of his concerns. He is best known today for his novels, but his other articles, examined in the context of his life, provide a more immediate and intimate insight into the development of his thinking.

D'Arcy McNickle (1904-1977) was one of a handful of people employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) under John Collier who continued to work for and write about Indian affairs for decades after the "Indian New Deal" of the 1930s and 1940s. McNickle, an enrolled member of the Flathead tribe of northwestern Montana, was hired under Collier's "Indian Civil Service" policy in 1936. At the time of his resignation from the bureau in 1952, he was head of the Tribal Organization Division. By that

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time, he had written his first historical monograph and a number of articles for the BIA's house organ, *Indians at Work*, and other articles as well.

After he left the bureau, McNickle established a health education and community development project among the Navajos at Crownpoint, New Mexico. This project, which lasted from 1953 to 1960, was funded through the National Congress of American Indians, an organization he had helped to found in 1944. Although McNickle continued to write during this period, his lengthy report of the Crownpoint project was never published.

In 1961, McNickle chaired the steering committee of the American Indian Chicago Conference, under the auspices of the University of Chicago. He was also the primary author of the definitive statement issued by that conference, the "Declaration of Indian Purpose," which reflected the broad spectrum of Indian needs and goals at that time. From 1956 to 1967, he participated in and later directed a series of summer leadership training workshops for young Indian college students at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

In 1966, McNickle accepted an appointment as chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the newly organized campus of the University of Saskatchewan in Regina, Canada. That same year he received an honorary doctorate in science from the University of Colorado for his work in applied anthropology. He remained in Canada until 1971. During those years he continued to write, producing a biography of Oliver La Farge, numerous book reviews for *The Nation* and other publications, and chapters for several books. Responding to renewed interest in Indian affairs during the 1960s, he also revised his earlier narrative histories.

By the time McNickle retired to Albuquerque in 1971, he was recognized as an elder statesman in Indian affairs. His writing, teaching, and leadership had yielded a body of work that still speaks to those who are interested in and concerned about the country's Native American population. Two of McNickle's three novels deal creatively with the impact of Indian and white cultures; his first one, *The Surrounded*, is recognized as a forerunner of the modern "Indian renaissance."¹

McNickle also wrote poetry and short stories, but he succeeded in publishing very little of this work. His short stories, both published and unpublished, have been collected in an annotated work by Birgit Hans, soon to be published by the University of

Arizona Press. His only published poetry is found in early issues of *The Frontier*, the student literary publication of the University of Montana, which later changed its name to *The Frontier and Midland*.

McNickle's writing has three distinct audiences. The largest consists of those who have read his novels. *The Surrounded*, which postdates Mourning Dove's *Cogewea* by nine years, was one of the first novels published by a Native American author. Although both *Cogewea* and *The Surrounded* were set on the Flathead Reservation and both featured the life of a mixed-blood, neither author was acquainted with or aware of the other. *Cogewea*, which has been republished recently by the University of Nebraska Press, is valued today primarily as an artifact. *The Surrounded*, however, is considered the first of a number of distinguished contemporary novels, including Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, and James Welch's *Winter in the Blood*, all of which, like *The Surrounded*, deal with the theme of the young mixed-blood who returns to the reservation and finds himself lost. McNickle's two other novels, *Runner in the Sun* (1954) and *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (1978), have received less critical attention than *The Surrounded*; all three have been reprinted recently by the University of New Mexico Press.

A second group of people interested in McNickle's work are cultural anthropologists. As a member of Collier's "Indian New Deal," McNickle observed and was sympathetic with the commissioner's attempts to enlist the help of anthropologists and other social scientists in redesigning the government's Indian policy. He was an eager student, and by the time his Crownpoint project ended in 1960, he was recognized as an authority in the field of cultural anthropology, although he was completely self-taught. His stature is evident in the fact that he was elected fellow in both the American Anthropology Association and the Society for Applied Anthropology. A number of his articles reveal his maturing insight into the relationship between personality and culture.

Historians of twentieth-century Indian affairs make up the third group of people who are interested in McNickle's work. Some of these historians are concerned with the overall development of Indian/white relationships, while others are more interested in Collier and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. McNickle's several narrative histories include *They Came Here*

First (1949), *Indians and Other Americans*, in which he collaborated with Harold Fey (1959 and 1970), and *The Indian Tribes of the United States* (1962), revised and republished in 1973 as *Native American Tribalism*. McNickle used a broad brush to paint a picture of changing government policies and the remarkable adaptations Indians have made to those policies. Also of interest to historians is his *Indian Man: A Biography of Oliver La Farge* (1971), which he admitted writing as much for a review of the history of the period as for the biography itself.

While McNickle's various books are important, however, it is the more ephemeral corpus of his articles that provides immediate insight into his thinking at any particular time. Although the articles are at times somewhat repetitious (he wrote about the same matters for a wide variety of publications), there are recurrent themes that provide an underlying unity.

McNickle's first job with the BIA bore the title of junior administrative assistant. It was a position created by Collier that allowed him to use McNickle as a "floater"; he could be assigned wherever there was a need. Collier first assigned him to update tribal rolls and interpret the new constitutional structure that was the essential component of the Indian Reorganization Act. When he could be spared, he was loaned to Lloyd LaRouche, editor of *Indians at Work*, for various research and writing assignments. During his first two years with the bureau, McNickle wrote several brief articles, "Alaska—Getting Acquainted" (November 1936), "Hill 57" (February 1937), and "Maine" (October 1937). These were straightforward expository accounts of the Indian people in those areas and of the bureau's efforts in their behalf. Of particular interest to McNickle was a place called Hill 57, which was a community of "landless" Indians near Great Falls, Montana. These people were métis, the descendents of mixed-blood French Canadians and Cree Indians, McNickle's own blood ancestry.² He described the bureau's attempts to acquire a land base for these people, an attempt that eventually failed when the local residents successfully fought the acquisition.

Indians at Work not only informed field workers about BIA activities across the country; it also contained an occasional book review, and in 1937 McNickle authored three of them. He reviewed Edwin Corle's *People of the Earth* in the issue of 1 July, Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes's *El Indio* in the 15 July–1 August issue, and Oliver La Farge's *The Enemy Gods* in the issue of 19 December. La Farge had enthusiastically reviewed *The Surrounded*

the year before, and McNickle was, in turn, excited about *The Enemy Gods*. It was the story of a Navajo boy, raised by white missionaries, who gradually found his way back to the religion of his people. McNickle explained that the Indians' desire to worship was no different from that of other people, and the expression of that desire within their own culture was equally valid and deserved the same respect as any other religious practice. He would write repeatedly about the universality of the Native American experience.

McNickle's fervent praise of the book returned to haunt him later. By the late 1930s, Collier was under increasing attack from the right-wing American Indian Federation, most notably in the person of an Iroquois woman, Alice Lee Jemison. Collier and Jemison faced each other during a congressional hearing in 1940, and Jemison flaunted McNickle's review as an example of the anti-Christian, pro-communist bias of the BIA. McNickle was present at the hearing and was called upon to defend himself, which he did quite effectively. Collier also spoke on his behalf and probably saved McNickle's job.³

From his first days with the bureau, McNickle was an ardent supporter of Collier's program for the reform of federal Indian policy. Collier increasingly turned to McNickle for help in implementing this program, and, as a result, McNickle came to know it well. On the fourth anniversary of the Wheeler-Howard Act, which implemented that reform, McNickle wrote an article for *Indians at Work* entitled "Four Years of Indian Reorganization" (July 1938). Although it was hardly an objective assessment, this article was one of the first published evaluations of Collier's administration written from the inside.

The year of that article, 1938, marked the high point of congressional support for the Indian New Deal. After that, criticisms mounted from the far right, the debacle of stock reduction on the Navajo Reservation came to light, and Congress began to question the bureau's land acquisition policy and Collier's experiments in social engineering. But in 1938, McNickle was still enthusiastic. He told his readers that the reorganization policy was leading to increased tribal self-determination by training tribal members in political and economic affairs. He cited events in Alabama, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, and South Dakota to prove the effectiveness of land acquisition and various new education programs. Congress, he argued, must not reduce funding at this critical moment. The tribes must not be set adrift just

as they are learning the rudiments of self-government. Many problems still existed, especially in dealing with heirship lands and with law and order jurisdiction. While much had been accomplished, much still needed to be done.

McNickle contributed two additional book reviews to *Indians at Work* before its demise in 1945. One was of George C. Vaillant's *Indian Arts of North America* in July 1940, the other of Julia B. McGillicuddy's biography of her father, *McGillicuddy, Agent*, in June 1941. He also contributed a brief descriptive piece on Indian basketry in July 1940.

Of greater importance than his book reviews in reflecting his own opinions were four other articles in *Indians at Work* which revealed the direction of his growth in the field of cultural anthropology. McNickle had first become interested in linguistics when, working on *The Surrounded*, he encountered the problem of translating folk tales from an oral tradition into written English. In "What Do the Old Men Say," an article in *Indians at Work*, December 1941, he addressed the fact that, among Indians, the old men who were the traditional leaders had been quite literally robbed of their voice because they spoke no English. The BIA had failed to provide for translators who were sufficiently fluent in both languages, thus denying an effective voice for those traditional spokesmen. Young Indian people who spoke English often were unable to understand their elders' speech sufficiently to provide accurate translations. Perhaps the bureau preferred it that way.

Indians themselves, McNickle admitted, bore some of the responsibility for this condition by failing to teach the language to their children. But such instruction had become increasingly difficult as small children were removed from the family and sent to off-reservation boarding schools. The remedy was twofold. Indian parents should be encouraged to teach their language to children at home, and the BIA must begin to train some young people specifically for the role of interpreter. The wisdom of the old men must not be lost to the future.

In late 1941, just before the onset of World War II, the Bureau of Indian Affairs embarked on a joint program with the University of Chicago that became known as the Indian Education, Personality, and Administration Research Project. This project was Collier's most elaborate attempt to involve social scientists in the policy-making process. The so-called Indian Personality

Study was designed to determine how Indian personality developed within the social context of the tribal community and what the cultural forces were that had kept Indian people Indian, despite all efforts of Euro-Americans to remake them into their own image.

In May 1942, as the project was getting under way, McNickle attended a training session in Santa Fe for those who would carry out the actual fieldwork, and he described the experience enthusiastically in "Toward Understanding" (May/June 1942). Despite the distractions and dislocations of World War II, the fieldwork was completed on schedule, and a second meeting was held in Chicago in March 1943 to assemble the data and plan for its publication ("Science and the Future," May/June 1943). Although the project ultimately fell short of Collier's expectations, several important tribal studies emerged, produced by a committee on which McNickle and his wife both served.

McNickle wrote one more article for *Indians at Work*, "We Go on from Here" (November/December 1943), which was also printed in *Common Ground* (Autumn 1943). This piece was longer than the others he had written for the bureau. It was a somewhat romantic, anecdotal exposition of Indian sensibilities that would be reflected in his later Indian histories. In it he defended the Indians' desire to maintain the reservations as their home. Once again he expressed the idea that the Indians' life experience was a universal one, only lived within a different cultural context. "Why should this be difficult to understand, this desire to live in the desert or the mountains, away from that which is not yours? To choose that which is your own and wrap it around you, hold it to you—surely this is a trait of our common humanity."

This was the same theme McNickle had used earlier in his review of La Farge's *The Enemy Gods*—the Indians' spiritual quest was not uniquely Indian, but rather was an expression of a universal desire. The Indians' love for their homeland was also a trait common to mankind, not some savage aberration that marked the Indian as less than human. Nevertheless, whites had consistently viewed the Indian "always through a culture [which was] not his, which he never claimed as his own, and which he ha[d] not yet desired as his own. All the difficulties we have with Indians trace to that, all the wrong things we do for Indians, trace to that." Nevertheless, McNickle concluded hopefully, "we are only at a place of beginning, and we go on from here." Collier,

however, resigned in January 1945, and the ensuing fifteen years saw much of what he had attempted undone by more "bad decisions and worse choices of policy."

McNickle published two other articles during his years with the BIA. In 1939 he addressed the fifth annual meeting of the Missouri Archeological Society, and his paper, "The American Indian Today," was published in that year's September bulletin. For this address, too, he used anecdotal material to describe and justify Collier's program. He assured his audience that the commissioner wanted neither "willy-nilly assimilation" nor "segregation behind reservation barriers." Instead, Collier's program was designed to assure tribal survival and increased tribal self-determination.

In 1943, *Scientific Monthly* published McNickle's article, "Peyote and the Indian," which discussed the emotionally charged subject of peyote and the Native American Church. Here McNickle presented the latest scientific information about the substance; he described its ceremonial use and stressed the incorporation of various Christian elements in the ritual of the Native American Church. Once again he insisted on the universality of the Indians' religious experience. The Indian, he wrote, "believes that the white man's God and his own are the same, but that each approaches him in his own way or by his own road." The use of peyote, he explained, had made a significant social contribution by serving in a constructive way to restore unity to tribal people whose splintered social world was in danger of disintegration. Writing for a non-Indian audience, he summarized his argument by declaring that "most important of all is the social significance of the cult, which anthropologists can explain but which the casual observer must miss." Whether or not peyote became a permanent element of Indian life, its use by Native Americans deserved valid social and religious considerations.

Collier's resignation in 1945, and Congress's subsequent determination to reduce the federal budget after the war, paved the way for a reversal of federal Indian policy and a return to the pre-Collier concept of assimilation, with a stated goal of the eventual termination of the historical Indian/white trust relationship. McNickle remained at the bureau, trying to help the various tribes respond to pressures that by the 1950s would become almost intolerable. He was increasingly sensitive to the problem of communication between two disparate worlds, as was evident in his think piece that appeared in *Common Ground* in spring 1945. In "Afternoon on a Rock," he recalled a visit to the Hopi mesas

in Arizona the previous summer. The Hopis had asked difficult questions about the whites' invasion of the Indians' land and the subsequent imposition of alien laws and customs, questions that disturbed the consciences of the visitors. McNickle signed a contract with Lippincott for his first historical monograph, *They Came Here First* (1949), and he shortened this earlier article to use as the foreword for that book. Another essay published later in *Common Cause* (Summer 1949), "Golden Myth," was also incorporated into that book.

Another McNickle article, "Rescuing Sisseton," published in *The American Indian* (1947), was a scathing indictment of past Indian policy as it affected just one Indian tribe. It was written in response to a congressional bill that would restore the tribal land of the Sisseton Indians, a branch of the Santee Sioux in Minnesota. By 1945, these Indians had lost almost their entire land base and were living in conditions described by investigators as "one of the most disgraceful situations in America." McNickle argued in favor of the proposed legislation, and he used the situation as an object lesson for those who encouraged immediate termination. The future would be as grim for other tribes as it had been for the Sissetons should the others also be forced to undergo termination before they were adequately prepared for it. "For those who go on advocating the 'freeing' of Indians from the protective restrictions lying on their land—will they insist that every tribe of Indians live through the same experience in order to gain salvation?" he asked pointedly.

Nevertheless, termination reflected the public as well as the congressional will, and the process continued to escalate. Later, again in *The American Indian*, McNickle examined some of the underlying questions relating to termination in "Basis for a National Indian Policy" (1949). The United States government's relationship with its Indian peoples involved both a responsibility and an obligation. The government's responsibility related to righting past wrongs in usurping Indian lands and tribal autonomy, while its obligation originated in treaties that carried the weight of constitutional law and could not be abrogated unilaterally. The two, McNickle said, must not be confused. Indian people could and should learn to adapt so that they themselves could assume responsibility for protecting and maintaining tribal land and resources. The federal government, on the other hand, had long-standing obligations to assist in this development. McNickle then returned to an old Collier theme: Indian administration "must

make increasing use of methods of the social sciences in resolving the basic problems of assisting the Indians to adjust their lives to the dominant culture." Although McNickle still believed that assimilation was both possible and inevitable, he insisted that it take place at a rate determined by the Indians themselves and not by government fiat.

Despite the rising tide of sentiment favoring termination, McNickle was not quite ready to give up on the ability of the federal government to develop a constructive Indian policy. In response to President Harry Truman's Point Four Program of financial aid for Third World countries, McNickle suggested that such a program might also be effective among Indian tribes. In "U.S. Indian Affairs," *America Indigena* (October 1953), he presented the case for a domestic Point Four Program for Indians that would give them the deciding vote on how such aid would be spent. "It would cost money, rather staggering amounts of money at the outset," he wrote. "But it is to be questioned whether a decent alternative exists to such a program of investment, the success of which would pay back the United States many-fold in increased productivity of wealth and human adjustment." The various federal antipoverty programs established among Indian tribes in the 1960s, which were administered by the Indians themselves, would show the practicality of McNickle's suggestion. They provided a training ground for self-administered programs such as the bureau itself had never attempted.

By the time he wrote that article, however, McNickle had taken a temporary leave of absence from the BIA, a leave which became permanent in 1954. He had become convinced that the government's termination policy was morally wrong, and that the government per se was unable to develop and execute a constructive Indian policy. Private agencies, he felt, provided greater flexibility, especially in their financial support, and in 1953 he launched a privately funded program in community development under the aegis of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI).

During this period of change in his personal life, McNickle wrote his second novel, *Runner in the Sun* (1954), and a long article on North American Indians for the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The latter was a straightforward presentation based on his research in history, anthropology, and ethnography. This article was reprinted in updated editions of the encyclopedia into the 1960s and reached thousands of school children and other students.

Now freed from the constraints of being a BIA employee, McNickle could speak bluntly about the policy of termination being pursued by the federal government. In a series of articles published in the 1950s, he clarified his thinking. Through a variety of publications he reached an extensive audience; he even took to the air. In February 1954, he participated in a University of Chicago Roundtable radio broadcast (no. 828, 21 February 1954). He challenged various private organizations, especially the American Anthropological Association, to join forces with NCAI to forestall congressional attempts to terminate federal responsibility for Indian tribal communities.

Later that year, in "A U.S. Indian Speaks" (*Americas*, vol. 6, 1954), he presented his strongest case yet for cultural pluralism, defending in eloquent terms the Indians' apparent unwillingness to adopt the whites' life-style. The Indians, he pointed out, readily accepted guns and bullets, woven blankets and clothing, steel knives and iron pots, because these items improved life as they traditionally lived it. But becoming competitive and acquisitive meant adopting values contrary to traditional Native American culture, and unless Indians could be convinced that this was a good thing to do, they would refuse. Whites viewed this either as unreasonable stubbornness or innate stupidity, but the problem was with American ethnocentrism. "Rarely does it occur to any of us that *our* attitudes toward people, toward the physical universe, and toward the supernatural are not a universal characteristic of human nature," McNickle wrote. Indians were not yet convinced of the superiority of the whites' ways. The failure of the government to bring about the desired changes went deeper than the deficiencies of any individual or government bureau. "It has been a failure to understand the role of culture, a failure to see that culture shapes many of our ends," that left Americans unable to understand Indian resistance to assimilation.

McNickle's community development program in the 1950s among the Navajos at Crownpoint, New Mexico, reflected his desire to remove various impediments to change that had locked those people into a cycle of frustration and hopelessness. He believed that, once they were introduced to the technical advances available through white society, they would move toward adaptation and acculturation. As director of American Indian Development (AID), the program adjunct of NCAI, McNickle gathered together a core group of traditional Navajo leaders. They were first encouraged to identify the needs of their community, and

then they worked toward solutions that were compatible with both their own and the outside culture. He described various aspects of that project in "Indian Crisis, U.S.A." (*Colby Junior College Bulletin*, April 1954) and "The Indian in American Society" (*The Social Welfare Forum*, 1955). In "The Healing Vision" (*Tomorrow*, 1956) and "It Takes Two to Communicate" (*International Journal of Health Education*, July 1959), he discussed the health education program that was a vital part of the larger project.

McNickle's efforts to bring change to Navajo society by working with older, traditional leaders produced mixed results. Changes were occurring rapidly on the Navajo Reservation in the 1950s, and he was forced to accept the fact that the older men were losing the positions of leadership they had formerly enjoyed. They were being displaced by younger people who spoke English and were competitive for political power. These young people, educated in BIA or mission schools, had been taught to look down on their Indian heritage. They had been systematically denied information about their own history and traditions, and they had become marginal to both Indian and white society. From 1956 to 1967, therefore, McNickle was involved with a six-week summer leadership training workshop designed explicitly to help Indian college students develop a positive image of their Indian identity and of themselves as tribal members. He described these workshops in both theoretical and practical terms in "The Socio-cultural Setting of Indian Life" (*American Journal of Psychiatry*, August 1968).

During the years of the Crownpoint Project, McNickle's income depended on contributions from various private institutions; to supplement this income he wrote a number of book reviews for the *American Anthropologist*. In volume 54 (1952) he reviewed Ruth Underhill's *Red Man's America: A History of Indians in the United States*; in volume 57 (1955) Peter J. Rahill's *The Catholic Indian Missions and Grant's Peace Policy*; in volume 59 (1957) David A. Baerreis's *The Indian in Modern America*; and in volume 65 (1963) Francis Paul Prucha's *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834*. These reviews reveal McNickle's sensitivity to the written language and his insight into other people's understanding of Indian affairs.

The government's termination policy continued throughout the 1950s, and McNickle continued to express his opposition to it. In "It's Almost Never Too Late" (*Christian Century*, 20 February 1957), he harked back once again to Collier's appeal to the

Indian Bureau: Hire social scientists who know something about Indians to develop Indian policy! A bureaucrat who knows nothing about indigenous tribal people, whether or not he is an effective administrator, will not be able to work effectively with Indians. Dillon Myer, Indian commissioner from 1950 to 1953, had brought such men into the Indian office. Myer had been director of the War Relocation Authority during World War II, and after the war had effectively closed the Japanese relocation centers and returned the occupants to American society. As Indian commissioner, he viewed reservations in the same light as the relocation centers. According to McNickle, Myer had made a cynical decision to end the "Indian problem" by terminating the tribes, regardless of the consequences. For this purpose he hired professional administrators, rather than people who had been properly trained in human relations, as the situation demanded. By the time McNickle wrote this article, much damage had been done, and it was almost, but not quite, "too late" to halt the damage brought about by Myer's dogmatic insensitivity.

In two articles that followed within the year, McNickle reviewed the historical context of the contemporary scene. The articles were "Indian and European: Indian-White Relations from Discovery to 1887," in the *Annals of the American Academy* (May 1957) and "The Indians of the United States," in *America Indigena* (March 1958). The *Annals* article was the lead-off feature in an issue devoted entirely to Indian affairs, and judging from the list of contributors to that issue, McNickle was becoming recognized as one of the nation's eminent authorities on Indian affairs.

His most powerful statement against termination was also written at this time. In "Process or Compulsion: The Search for a Policy of Administration in Indian Affairs" (*America Indigena*, July 1957), he asserted that all Americans, not just Congress and the federal government, were responsible for the failure to develop a cohesive and humane Indian policy. Once again he reviewed the historical context. The original treaties had "plunged the United States, without any master plan or forward looking, into a fiduciary role which ultimately resulted in the regulation of internal affairs of Indian tribes." As those regulations multiplied, often in response to demands from the public, the bureau failed to recognize the nature of the problem, which basically was to work constructively with the Indian people and bring them into a functioning relationship with the rest of the population. Increased dependency, on the one hand, and autocratic paternalism, on the

other, were the inevitable results. This was the ultimate failure of America's Indian policy. No administrative bureaucracy and no amount of money could create an effective Indian policy unless and until the Indians themselves contributed toward the solution.

In this article, McNickle seems finally to have rejected the idea that assimilation was inevitable. He suggested instead that an accommodation of Indian society to white society on an equal basis might be possible. "So long . . . as Indians adopt the ways of the white man only in part, they remain out of the general society," he wrote. "The problem becomes one of finding ways of increasing the area of adjustment . . . without destroying those parts of Indian life which are still functioning and which convey to the Indian a feeling of security in his own personality." An important principle was at stake here. How can the United States, as a political democracy, continue to reject people who are culturally nonconformist? McNickle asked rhetorically. Indian policy must be directed toward the goal of accepting Indians as they are, as an integral part of American society, or it will continue to be frustrated in dealing with the long-festering "Indian problem."

But McNickle remained pessimistic about the government's ability, or its willingness, to act effectively. Nongovernment individuals and groups who were not constrained by the tyranny of annual budget could produce more effective and longer-lasting results. In "Private Intervention" (*Human Organization*, 1961), he discussed the historic role of private organizations in both the United States and Canada from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. He also used the occasion of the seventy-eighth annual meeting of the Indian Rights Association in April 1961 to tell his audience about the American Indian Chicago conference scheduled for June that year ("Indian Expectations," *Indian Truth*, June 1961). Here, for the first time, Indians from all over the country, tribal and nontribal, would gather to discuss their common problems. McNickle himself was chairman of the steering committee for that conference, and the primary author of the "Declaration of Indian Purpose," a document that became the official statement of that conference.⁴

For the next several years, McNickle worked on larger literary projects. With Harold Fey he co-authored *Indians and Other Americans* (1959 and 1970). He wrote *Indian Tribes of the United States: Ethnic and Cultural Survival* (1962), and finished his report on the

Crownpoint Project. Beginning in 1965, he also wrote a series of book reviews for *The Nation* on recently published Indian material. Among the books he reviewed were Gene Weltfish's *The Lost Universe* and Ralph K. Andrist's *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indians*, reviewed in "The Goals of the Group" (27 September 1965); a reprint of Wayne Dennis's *The Hopi Child* and Edgar Z. Friedenberg's *The Dignity of Youth and Other Atavisms*, in "Two Ways to Grow Up" (28 March 1966); Alvin M. Josephy's *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest*, in "In Search of the White Man's Guidance" (25 April 1966); *Wilderness Kingdom: Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains, 1840-1847, the Journals and Paintings of Nicholas Point, S.J.*, in "A Record of the Vanishing West" (25 December 1967); Frederick Dockstadter's *Indian Art in South America*, in "The Evidence of Their Lives" (22 July 1968); Alvin Josephy's *The Indian Heritage of America*, in "Looking Backward" (23 December 1968); and Alfonso Ortiz's *The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being and Becoming in a Pueblo Society* (27 April 1970).

McNickle also reviewed J. B. Jorgenson's *The Sun Dance Religion: Power for the Powerless in the New Mexico Historical Review* (April 1973); Wilcomb Washburn's *Red Man's Land, White Man's Law* in the *Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Spring 1973); and Margaret Szasz's *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928-1973* in *The Historian* (May 1976).

McNickle wrote his last review for *The Nation*, "Interpreting Native America" (7 December 1974), on William Brandon's *The Last American: The Indian in American Culture*. McNickle was particularly excited about this book, which examined the sweep of Indian/white relations from the perspective of conflicting cultural values. McNickle himself, having written extensively about Indian history, recognized two major problems in doing so: the lack of sources representing the Indian view and the difficulty of establishing a unifying theme in the face of tribal cultural diversity. He praised Brandon's meticulous efforts to reconstruct the context of the early narratives so as to gain insight into the Indian rather than the white presence. Brandon had also dealt admirably with the second problem: He suggested that the unifying theme of all Indian peoples was their attempt to live in spiritual harmony with the land. The European, on the other hand, wanted to acquire and control his world. According to Brandon, "the great reigning motive of life in the Old World was acquisition of

wealth, property, business, the commerce of individual gain and ambition . . . and in this worldly welter religion was only one of many forces." For the Indian, religion encompassed all aspects of life. Summarizing the contrast, Brandon wrote that "the Indian world was devoted to living, the European world to getting." But, although the European accomplished his "getting" through use of superior technology, in all other aspects of life, in ethics, morality, justice, and wisdom, the Indian, according to Brandon, was his equal or superior. It is not surprising that McNickle was pleased with Brandon's effort; he himself had entertained similar ideas about Indians and the modern materialistic world for years.

McNickle wrote several other articles during the 1960s in response to current developments. In "The Indian Tests the Mainstream" (*The Nation*, 26 September 1966), he voiced his disappointment over the 1965 firing of Indian Commissioner Philo Nash, who had begun to rebuild the government's shattered relationship with Indian people after the drive for termination was itself terminated. With Nash's firing, the federal government once again tried to impose its own pace on assimilation and refused to participate in a dialogue that might have provided an opportunity for Indians to have a voice in determining their own future. But Native Americans were beginning to realize the extent of their political leverage under the slogan "red power," as McNickle recognized when he referred to Nancy O. Lurie's depiction of an "Indian renaissance" that had appeared in the fall 1965 issue of *Mid-Continent Studies Journal*. Here indeed was an indication of change in Indian self-definition.⁵ In such organizations as the NCAI and the National Indian Youth Council, individuals were beginning to think of themselves as Indians as well as tribal members, and through this emerging Indian identity they were talking "in the language of politics." "It is obvious what must happen," McNickle explained. "The function of decision must be taken from the expert administrators and the wielders of power and put into the [Indian] community where decisions belong."

In "The Dead Horse Walks Again" (*The Nation*, 25 December 1967), McNickle pointed out that although termination as a policy had been discontinued, the BIA was apparently unable to free itself of the old habit of paternalism. Through the Indian Resources Development Act of 1967, it attempted once again to control the development of Indian assets by calling upon the credit resources

of the private marketplace. "The Indians," McNickle dryly remarked, "are looking elsewhere" for economic assistance. They were not interested in continuing their old colonial status.

In view of McNickle's numerous contributions to *The Nation*, it is not surprising that Carey McWilliams, editor of that publication and an old friend of both McNickle and Collier, asked McNickle to write an obituary on the occasion of Collier's death in May 1968. McNickle had kept in touch with the former commissioner and had remained intensely loyal to him. He welcomed the opportunity to go on record once again in defense of Collier's vision. Collier, he asserted, "quite certainly rescued American Indians from the doom prepared for them by generations of stupidity and venality fostered by government policies and practices." In preserving the land base and culture of the Indian communities, Collier had provided the ground from which adaptive and assimilative processes drew new growth. "A special debt [is] owed to John Collier," McNickle explained, "for having defined and explored the terms by which Indian people could survive" ("John Collier's Vision," *The Nation*, 3 June 1968).

During most of the period from 1966 to 1971, McNickle was in Canada, at the University of Saskatchewan. In addition to his teaching and his academic responsibilities as department chairman, he continued to write. Among other things, he contributed the long opening chapter for Eleanor Leacock and Nancy Lurie's *North Americans in Historical Perspective*, which was published in 1970. This book was a collection of essays by a group of distinguished international scholars in the fields of Indian anthropology and history. McNickle's chapter, "Americans Called Indians," was a study in ethnohistory in which he stressed the changing environments and adaptive techniques of pre-Columbian Native Americans. McNickle deliberately and pointedly speculated on the direct connections between prehistoric peoples and present tribes. "The prehistory of the New World, or what we have been able to learn of it, is not disjointed from contemporary society," he wrote. "The history of any people at any point in time is a continuity, a process out of its own past." When in 1973 he substantially revised his earlier *Indian Tribes of the United States: Ethnic and Cultural Survival*, he renamed it *Native American Tribalism: Indian Survivals and Renewals*, once again stressing the tribal peoples' adaptability and continuity.

Another article McNickle wrote in the 1970s was entitled

"American Indians Who Never Were" and was published in *New University Thought* (Spring 1971). Once again McNickle's work appeared with that of other leading Indian experts. This time he reminded his readers that "Indian" was a construct of the European mind, and that the images of Indians that had evolved over time reflected more the non-Indians' changing interpretations than the Native American reality. He appealed to anthropologists to look beyond the image of Indians frozen in the ethnographic present and search instead for the dynamics of change within Indian societies.

While McNickle was anticipating his retirement from academia, by 1971 he had made several long-term commitments for extensive writing projects. Several author/editors had asked him to write chapters for their books, and his next project was another long essay on Indian history, "The Clash of Cultures," published by the National Geographic Society in its beautifully illustrated volume, *The World of the American Indian* (1974). Here was McNickle at his best, addressing a literate but nonprofessional audience, describing events from the period of first contact between Indians and Europeans until the end of the Indian wars in 1890. He wrote, as always, from the Indian point of view, discussing accommodation and conflict while being generous and understanding of both sides. But his writing was taking on a more pessimistic note. He suggested that, given the inherent differences between red and white societies, the conflicts between the two seemed almost inevitable.

In 1972, while he was working on the article for the National Geographic Society, McNickle was invited to a conference, sponsored by the National Archives, on sources for research in Indian history. In one session, Indian Commissioner Louis Bruce and historian Lawrence C. Kelly gave their respective opinions on the long-term impact of Collier and the Indian New Deal, and McNickle commented on their assessments. Once again he used the opportunity to defend Collier and to present an insider's view of events of that time. Despite the criticisms that had been leveled at Collier since 1945, he pointed out, it was worth noting how many of Collier's forward-looking policies had become standard practice. His initial use of social scientists had led to technical assistance being offered to minority peoples worldwide; the personality studies had proven useful in improving both administration and policy; bilingual texts and appropriate teaching

materials were now widely used in Indian schools; Indian students were being taught their tribal history and were encouraged to be proud of it; and Indians were increasingly being consulted in matters that affected their lives. While Commissioner Bruce had not addressed the question of Collier's administration directly and McNickle had little to say about his presentation, he did question some of Kelly's statements. His remarks led to Kelly's subsequent articles about anthropologists and Collier's Indian reorganization program.⁶ Proceedings of the 1972 conference, including the presentations of Bruce, Kelly, and McNickle, were later published in Jane Smith and Robert Kvasnicka's *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox* (1976).

At about this time, McNickle wrote a two-part illustrated article, a fun piece, for American Airlines to include in their in-flight publication, *The American Way*. Titled "They Cast Long Shadows," the article consisted of half-page biographical sketches of Pontiac, Tecumseh, Geronimo, and others, and concluded with a list of such contemporaries as Vine Deloria, Jr., and N. Scott Momaday. This and other articles in the airline's series on Native Americans were compiled in a small volume called *Look to the Mountain Top*, published in 1972.

McNickle returned briefly to Canada in 1974 to address a symposium on "The Patterns of 'Amerindian' Identity," proceedings of which were published by Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Quebec, in 1976. Once again, in a paper entitled "The Surfacing of Native Leadership," he defended Collier's Indian New Deal. But here he admitted, for perhaps the first time in print, that Collier's vision was less than ideal. The true antagonist of Collier's reform, as McNickle phrased it, was the fact that Collier was a man of his time, whose thinking was shaped by the progressive reformers of the early twentieth century. "His mission as a man of reason was to create the opportunity [for the Indians to develop and use modern political devices], . . . and as a man of his class and generation he saw no reason why he should not speak for the Indian people, no reason why they should not be satisfied to have him speak." Despite some very real changes in Indian policy, the ethic of social intervention that motivated Collier in the 1930s still functioned as a tradition from an earlier period. He was of necessity limited in what he could do. "He could not substitute his will and his vision for Indian will and vision." Only the Indians themselves could determine their own future.

One of McNickle's last projects was to write still another account of modern Indian-white relations, this time for the American Indian Policy Review Commission. It was published as part of *Captives Within a Free Society* in 1979. In "The Right to Choose: A Policy for the Future," McNickle reviewed the context of significant federal legislation passed since the 1920s, covering in greater detail some of the material he had written about earlier. Especially significant at this time was his discussion of the Office of Economic Opportunity, part of President Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty" that had a revolutionary impact on most tribal groups. The Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity (ONEO) operated on the Navajo Reservation in a manner strikingly similar to that of McNickle's Crownpoint Project of the 1950s. It offered help to Indian communities, as the Point Four Program had and as McNickle himself had suggested as early as 1951. His survey concluded by summing up recent advances Indian people had made in working together to achieve their common political goals.

McNickle did not live to see his last several efforts in print. He died suddenly of a heart attack in October 1977, before publication of his report for the Indian Policy Review Commission and two book chapters written for other compilations. Both of these chapters developed further his assessments of the Indian New Deal. "Anthropology and the Indian Reorganization Act" appeared in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., *The Uses of Anthropology* (1979), and "The Indian New Deal as Mirror of the Future" in Ernest L. Schusky, ed., *Political Organization of Native North Americans* (1980), which Schusky dedicated to McNickle's memory. In both chapters, McNickle recalled the Collier years as "an aberration in time." While Collier himself was a reflection of early twentieth-century progressive idealism, the program that he envisioned for Indian self-determination was a program for the future. It had taken forty years for the federal government and the Indians themselves to catch up with Collier's vision of how they might reassert their autonomy as Indian people.

McNickle had caught some of Collier's vision, and he, perhaps more than any other single person, had been able to carry that vision toward fruition. And yet, at the end, McNickle himself was pessimistic about Indian cultural survival. His third novel, *Wind from an Enemy Sky*, which was published posthumously in 1978, was a wrenching depiction of the insurmountable obsta-

cles suggested by William Brandon's observation that "the Indian world, the world of actual Indian communities, is under relentless siege still, as it has been ever since Europeans encountered it." The primary reason for the continued siege was a basic cultural alienation. The Native American and the Euro-American still followed what he called different "maps of the mind," maps that led in diverging, not converging, directions. Mutual accommodation, at least in his novel, seemed increasingly unlikely.

Nevertheless, McNickle's presence and his writings helped shape the views of many of today's Native American leaders. It is, of course, impossible to assess with certainty the impact of his efforts to enhance both tribal and pantribal Indian identity through the American Indian Chicago Conference, his leadership training workshops, and the still-active National Congress of American Indians. Still, it seems fitting that D'Arcy McNickle is recognized today not only for his novels but increasingly for his own vision of what it means to be Indian. The Center for the History of the American Indians at the Newberry Library in Chicago, which he helped establish, now bears his name, as does a new library at the Salish-Kootenay Community College on the Flathead Reservation in Montana. These two institutions are fitting tributes to his lifelong work on behalf of Native American people.

NOTES

1. Charles R. Larson, *American Indian Fiction* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), chapter 4; Priscilla Oaks, "The First Generation of Native American Novelists," *Melus* (Spring 1978): 57-65; Louis Owens, "The 'Map of the Mind': D'Arcy McNickle and the American Indian Novel," *Western American Literature* (February 1985): 275-83.

2. Verne Dusenberry, "Waiting for a Day That Never Comes," *Montana Magazine of Western History* (April 1958): 26-39.

3. *House Committee on Indian Affairs, Wheeler-Howard Act, Exempt Certain Indians, Hearings on S.2130, 76th Congress, 3rd session.*

4. Nancy Oestreich Lurie, "The Voice of the American Indian," *Current Anthropology* 2 (December 1961): 478-500.

5. Stuart Levine and Nancy O. Lurie, eds., *The American Indian Today* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968), 295-328.

6. Lawrence Kelly, "Anthropology and Anthropologists in the Indian New Deal," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16 (1980): 6-24; and Lawrence Kelly, "Anthropologists in the Soil Conservation Service," *Agricultural History* 59 (April 1985): 136-47.