



The Indian as American

Some Observations from The Editor's Notebook

In general the anthropologists have been inclined to recommend that the social and cultural structure of a society, including its ideology, be accepted without direct efforts toward immediate alteration.

Such a course has obvious liabilities as far as policy is concerned. To put it most concretely and most bluntly, it surrenders the hope of transforming the basic value systems of the great masses of people who must be our allies in the near future. It involves the incalculable risk of materially strengthening groups whose ideas are fundamentally divergent from our own, and who would therefore in the future make unreliable partners. If it is not possible to spread the notions of democracy to men brought up in a patriarchal or traditional society, have we any assurance that the collaborators our aid now brings us will ever acquire an interest in our ultimate objectives?

Without in the least minimizing the real difficulties involved it may yet be that the problem is soluble. The American experience offers suggestive clues as to the nature of an operation in the present, for the essence of that experience was the spread of a complex of ideas to large groups of men initially hostile to it.

— OSCAR HANDLIN, *Race and
Nationality in American Life*

In scholarship, good fences do not make good neighbors. This set of essays is intended to break down as many fences as possible, not only to expose those of us who are not Indianists to what Indianists are up to, but also to expose the specialists to the attitudes and experience of those who deal with other areas of American Studies.

These introductory notes are an attempt to spell out some of the uses of the collection and to speculate about others. Because of the varied backgrounds of the audience to which they go, I have felt obliged to include rather more explanation and illustration than would be permissible in a more specialized essay. They are discursive for another reason as well. The material in this collection of articles is important. There are great practical problems, moral issues, even questions of national identity at stake. There are things we can learn from our "Indian problem" which we need to know in areas as diverse as cultural history and foreign policy, as well as things which we already know, from fields as diverse, which might help us to deal with Indians more successfully in the future than we have in the past. If, then, these notes are both speculative and discursive, it is also partially because their author, in his devil's-advocate role as editor, is deliberately trying to borrow ideas from as many different fields, and to poke into as many areas of application, as space allows.

This collection should serve, first of all, as a general briefing on what is going on today in the Indian world. This is of considerable interest, one assumes, even to the general reader, but it is of genuine importance to Americanists, whose field is so broad and whose specialties and angles of attack so various that there is always danger of their getting out of touch with developments in specialties other than their own. The Editor conceives of this journal as a kind of *Scientific American* for American Studies, a place where specialists can "report in" on the direction in which new research is going in their areas and on the implications of that work for people in other fields. Since things have been changing rapidly both in the Indian world and in our understanding of it, since most Americanists are not in close touch with Indianists, and since the Indian experience looms so large in the work of men in many different fields, it is important that we get ourselves squared away.

How badly misinformed we are, too. In discussing this project with colleagues in fields other than anthropology I have encountered a wide range of attitudes and an even wider range of "facts." I recall a few conversations:

There are so few Vanishing Americans about nowadays that they constitute a problem only in a moral sense. It is important that we do right by them, but only for symbolic reasons. The case of the Indian is not quite like the case of the Negro, for the Negroes constitute so large a group that there is a practical as well as symbolic motivation.

There are more Indians in the country today than there were at the time of the first European contact. [I asked the colleague who ventured this "fact" how he defined "Indian." He said that he wasn't really sure whether the statements referred to "full-blooded," "on-reservation," "traditional," or "any-one with any Indian blood"; this was just something which he had heard.]¹

The Indian Problem is essentially like the Negro Problem or the Puerto Rican Problem. Indians are an underprivileged minority which should be rapidly integrated into the texture of the American society.

Indians are shrewd cookies, who have learned to play the welfare game and the oil-right game so artfully that they constitute an unproductive national burden.

These reactions are not presented in a spirit of parody. How, after all, is an outsider supposed to know some of the peculiarities of the Indian situation—that, for example, many Indians look with suspicion at the civil rights movement? (See box, p. 5.) Outside of his own specialty, every specialist is a generalist, liable to make errors or to accept half-truths unless he has access to adequate summaries of the direction of good recent work. And for the rare scholar who is really committed to the idea of American Studies, whose specialty, so to speak, is some area of contact between two or more of the traditional disciplines, the availability of such reliable information is of special importance.

But the process works in the other direction as well. Quite often the fellow from the other field can see implications in your own work which you would never see yourself. This is good for the ego, but it's often good for your own investigation as well, since what he sees will often suggest new hypotheses to be tested, new ways in which data already on hand may be grouped, new directions for investigation. A second purpose of this collection, then, is to promote scholarly cross-fertilization, in the hope that the thinking it produces will show hybrid vitality.

Rednecks and Redskins

In some racially-tense sections, for example, an odd alliance has sprung up between white supremacists and Indians. To demonstrate their "liberalism," whites make a grand show of aiding Indian causes. "We're nice guys," the argument runs. "If Negroes were really equal, we would help them, too."

How little many Indians like to have their cause identified with that of the Negroes is illustrated by this letter-to-the-editor from a Winston-Salem newspaper.

A Good Street

To the Editor of the Journal:

This is pertaining to the article in Sept. 11 morning paper, where the shaded area showed poverty. We are all working people who are making our living, paying our taxes. We also have a deputy sheriff and a policeman on this street (Bloomfield Drive). I think we have a good street. In other words, I feel you are classing us with the Negroes to get them help. They live off welfare checks. They can have 12-14 children cause we help pay for their up keep. We stop at 1-2-3 because we have to support ourselves. Take another survey. Most of your dropouts and delinquents are from the Negro section, I bet. If we are in this poverty area, why aren't you helping us some? If you get this federal grant, we will be looking for sidewalks for our children to skate on, etc.

Since living in Winston-Salem, there are many things that I would like to tell you about. A tree fell in my back yard; I called the city to haul it off. We cut it up. The answer was we haven't the facilities. An article came up about leaves. I raked a pile, called the city. The answer was we haven't the facilities. My child was to have a physical. I called the Health Department. The answer was, do you have a pink or blue card? My answer was, "no, I'm not black." Why did you take the Public Records out of the paper? Because the biggest majority of all the meanness was Negro. Take another look at that map; it covers the Negro area. If you're wanting to help them, help them, but get us off that shaded area or else start sending me a few dollars a week. I could use it to send my three to school.

I am an American Indian from South Dakota and feel myself equal with any of you. Don't class us with these rioting, shooting, cutting friends of yours.

—MRS. WALTER B. FEEZOR
Winston-Salem.

Not many of the contributors to this collection, I think, will agree with the passage from Professor Handlin's book which appears above. Like good artists, anthropologists are in love with their material, and even those who specialize in culture-change or cultures in conflict develop an attachment to the cultures under study. Moreover, like good scientists, they want to be objective, and to overcome the prejudice built into their own culture's value system. So they are apt to say, "Here is a culture that works as well as ours; why destroy it?" But the desire to preserve cultures in this instance runs counter to the old national commitment to meliorism. There are tricky moral problems involved, too. Indians want not "integration" and "equality," but, as our contributors point out, special treatment: the point of the story about Marlon Brando and the fish-in (see Nancy Lurie's essay) is that those Indians wanted the right to fish when and where it was prohibited. Because of the long and ugly story of Indian mistreatment by the dominant culture, their case for special rights has moral weight even though it seems inconsistent with national notions of equality before the law. Old treaties give it legal weight as well. But the survival of such peculiarities tends to keep the Indian "outside," and thus to injure, not improve, Indian material welfare. What is best for the Indian is not necessarily best for Indian identity. What, then, is the "right" thing to do? Protect the Indian's peculiarity (and injure him economically)? Bring him as rapidly as possible into the texture of American society (and ignore what we owe him for four centuries of mistreatment)?

Two old opponents in this battle are the anthropologists and the "Old Indian Hands" in the Indian Bureau. It is my hope, in juxtaposing their argument against the views of outsiders (such as Handlin) to stimulate further debate, in which new insight and new experience will eventually be brought to bear.

Indians and Meliorists

One theme which runs through many of the essays in this collection is that the situation of the Indian is in a great many ways unlike that of other minority groups in American history. In the sense that some of our most satisfactory large-scale generalizations about the sources of American character and of American institutions do not really apply to the Indians in our midst, this is certainly true. The ideology of the Turner thesis, for example, does not work at all here. For Indians the frontier was not something to be pushed majestically onward; it was, over-simply, something which pushed them around. It is true that historians today are deeply suspicious of Turner's major tenets. The idea of the frontier as a safety-valve, easily accessible to the poor man in the East, and the idea of the frontier as the source of democratic impulse and institution, have undergone so much qualification and modification that many historiographers feel that the real significance of the Turner thesis is less as an approach to "truth" than as a stimulus to fruitful investigation. Everyone agrees, nevertheless, that the issues involved are important;

the debate was and is fascinating. But how irrelevant almost any aspect of it seems to the story of the Indian. Its focus is upon people formed by the frontier experience, not those the frontier pushed away. For example: at one stage of the debate, Turner's idea that the frontier predisposed American character and institutions towards individualism and democracy was challenged by scholars who attempted to demonstrate that many American ways, institutions (and even rural reform movements!) developed first in the cities. In terms of our notion of our national heritage, quite a bit was at stake in that scholarly dispute. Nothing in it, however, had anything to do with Indians. Wherever American characteristics developed, they were not Indian characteristics.

Most of the large-scale schemes we use to explain how Americans got that way similarly fail when applied to the Indian, because he never did get that way. Alexis de Tocqueville's analysis of the implications of democracy hardly applies; Thorstein Veblen's quasi-anthropological, quasi-economic and ambiguously satirical explanation of the sources of modern value systems makes some sense for any culture, but its target clearly is modern society. In the case of Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur's character study of the American "new man," we do encounter something relevant to the Indian, but that is only because Crèvecoeur's thinking reflects his age's idealization of the *homme naturel*. His subject, however, is the "new man" formed when a European came to the new environment, not the fellow who was there before he arrived.

A more recent approach has grown out of the works of students of the American immigrant, notably Marcus Hansen and Oscar Handlin. It is an approach to which I am personally very partial, but it does not seem at first glance to be obviously relevant for Indians either. Handlin, for example, says that what all Americans (except the Indians) have ultimately in common is that something was terribly wrong where they were, or they would not have come here in the first place. Handlin considers the fact that they were "uprooted" very important for an understanding of the sources of American social radicalism, the almost universally-held notion that a man's place in society ought to be the result of choice, energy and ability, and not merely inherited station. This simple idea is foreign to traditional societies. Different though they were from one another, most Indian societies were traditional in this sense.

The related idea of the perfectable society, the place which can be made better than the old place, is automatically present in groups which are seen from the point of view of what we might call "the immigrant hypothesis." Indeed, in some cases, it preceded the actual idea of migration to the New World: the Puritans, for example, had in mind a revolutionary new kind of society before they hit upon their colonial scheme. For many later groups, no such systematic party line was present, but the notion of the place which could be made better came across clearly both to Americans and many humble Europeans. Henry Adams, speaking of the hostility of European critics to the new republic, put it eloquently:

. . . no one questioned the force or the scope of an emotion which caused the poorest peasant in Europe to see what was invisible to poet and philosopher,—the dim outline of a mountain-summit across the ocean, rising high above the mist and mud of American democracy.²

Among settled Americans, the idea was always present, if only as a matter of unspoken national consensus. Adams, discussing the early nineteenth century, again is pertinent:

Every foreigner and Federalist agreed that . . . [Jefferson] was a man of illusions, dangerous to society and unbounded in power of evil; but if this view of his character was right, the same visionary qualities seemed also to be a national trait, for every one admitted that Jefferson's opinions, in one form or another, were shared by a majority of the American people.³

But besides this unspoken and unsystematic consensus there have often been more doctrinaire or systematic views as well. Millennialism, for instance, is understood to be a theological formalization of related ideas. Millenarian thinking antedates settlement, but it is interesting to see how closely it is tied over the centuries in America to social ideas. It is also interesting to note that it has its strongest traditions among Americans of the older stocks, British and West-European.⁴ We tend to associate millennialism with nineteenth century religious groups and communities, but in point of fact, though the conception of human nature changed radically over the years, the tradition is much older, and there are strong links between the generations. A recent survey of the field lists "John Cotton, Ephraim Huit, Increase Mather, John Davenport, John Eliot, Samuel Sewall, Cotton Mather and Joseph Morgan" as vigorous colonial millennialists, points out that Jonathan Edwards was a millenialist, and traces his influence through "Timothy Dwight, Ezra Stiles, Joseph Bellamy, Jonathan Edwards Jr. and Samuel Hopkins." Hopkins' views are causally connected to the founding of the Andover Theological Seminary, and from Andover graduated John Humphrey Noyes: the connection is direct, indeed.⁵ Thus we have ample evidence that this extreme form of institutionalized meliorism remained alive and vigorous among older stock. It was in no sense an idea which had died out only to be reinvigorated by the coming of the newer kinds of immigrants who again saw America as the place which could be made better. On the contrary, it remained so viable that related intellectual and religious formalizations continued to appear among descendants of the older settlers. I mention this rather specialized form of thought to suggest how really compelling the immigrant hypothesis is: it accounts not merely for the sort of generalized hopefulness which the uprooted man feels in deciding to try his luck in the new land, but also for the presence of very specific ideas which the new land seems to draw to itself and which continue to flourish on its soil.

Happily meliorism of the more general sort is still with us as well. Our friends still admire us for it, and our critics still fear it; President Johnson's "Great Society" is but the latest of a great number of very varied forms in which it has appeared. Americans have often failed to recognize its essential radicalism because it has so frequently been embodied in ideas which we consider rather conservative. We think, for example, of the Horatio Alger ideal as a pet notion of the conservative

businessman. As anyone from a nation in which class lines are more rigid and change of class more difficult to accomplish will tell us, however, it is a deeply radical idea. In most Latin American nations, for example, anyone who holds it is by definition a liberal, almost a rebel. And President de Gaulle, in his continuing campaign against the encroachment of "the American civilization" upon *la belle France*, is attacking, in reality, not Coca Cola and California wine, but rather the ideal of rapid social mobility, which has in fact made strong and healthy inroads into the traditionally more rigid class structure of his nation. The United States as a nation is thus merely de Gaulle's scapegoat; it is a way of assigning blame for deep social unrest in France to something outside of France. The real failure is that of the French political system: it has not yet provided an adequate political framework for the expression of the energy, ideals and aspirations of restless and upwardly-mobile Frenchmen. France has a harder time adjusting to the insecurities which come with mobility because its history is different than ours: as ex-immigrants who started from scratch, we are accustomed to staking our lives on social change. Change, as one critic put it, is our norm.

Thus this fine hypothesis sheds light not merely upon our own history but upon other peoples' misunderstandings of us, helps us to see in which ways our civilization is unlike others, and even enables us to predict to some extent the areas of tension which will arise as factors which have shaped our culture begin to operate on other and different cultures. They are acting today, as we know, on cultures far more different from ours than French culture is. The factors with which we are dealing are part of a dense nucleus of different but related and overlapping ideas: social mobility, "uprootedness," meliorism and social radicalism. Moving out from this core of ideas, one encounters expanding rings of related phenomena from various areas of our national experience. I have already mentioned the peculiar national receptivity to millennialism; there are other religious movements which seem relevant—revivalism, for instance, or the group of new sects and churches organized late in the last century. In intellectual history one thinks of transcendentalism, of pragmatism; in political thinking of Jeffersonian agrarianism, Jacksonian democracy, progressivism, the New Deal. One wants to go on, to elaborate, to define the complex pattern of relationships. Suffice it to say, for our purposes, that though the pattern is very complex, the relationships are real enough, and the total body of related phenomena is so great that our culture really cannot be understood without it. If the Indian's peculiarities really keep him out of touch with all of this, he is very different indeed.

Our contributors generally feel that he is, that Indians are entirely outside this pervasive tradition of American belief both in its unspoken form and its more systematic manifestations. Thus the Waxses ask "Education for what?" because education, since Jefferson's day, has been understood as the key to the social side of the melioristic process. But for people whose beliefs do not include the process, who have never shared the vision of the "mountain-summit," it can seem irrelevant. If they have picked up the beliefs too late, it may merely seem frustrating.

The Indian in the Ghetto

If our "uprootedness" has helped make the United States fertile to social radicalism, and if the resultant political idea—simply that a man's station in life ought to reflect his energies and abilities—is, as many of our friends abroad will tell us, our single most valuable ideological export, both "uprootedness" and the idea of social mobility seem curiously irrelevant for the Indians in our midst. Most Indian life throughout the history of the various tribes since the time of first contact has been, in almost any sense of the word, deeply conservative. This would tend to suggest that an Indianist would have relatively little to say to a student of other minority groups in the United States, except in the always-useful sense in which contrast itself can help to define issues. But in point of fact, there are a good many ways in which the work of the anthropologists who have studied Indian groups can be of use to the historians and sociologists who have worked with different minorities, and there are already some ways in which the Indianists can learn from the work of the others. No one observer is going to be able to put his finger on all such ways in which this work can be mutually useful; let me mention one which quite accidentally came to my attention.

In the papers by Rachlin and Thomas are discussions of Indian communities in cities. Thomas makes the point that such settlements often tend to be quite Pan-Indian.⁶ In discussing with anthropologists the matter of Indian settlement in cities, I discovered that many of them were not aware of the impressive corpus of investigation of the impact of American cities on foreign nationality groups. In many cases, immigrants came from nations or areas in which modern nationalism had not yet taken firm hold. Many tended to think of themselves in terms of a section or province, or even a small town. But in the New World, their circle of friends from the old area was too small to produce a satisfactory group identification. Moreover, members of the dominant culture, confused by the multiplicity of place names, and accustomed to thinking in national terms, tended to refer to them not by region—the region was unfamiliar—but rather by nation. Everyone had heard of the nation. Within the foreign language group itself, collective action of any sort—social club, burial society, politics—was more effective if undertaken not by the people from this or that province, but by Poles or Italians. The result was the creation of a sense of foreign nationality. But the "sense" had usually been generated in the United States. Immigrants, especially those from provincial and rural places, often became conscious of their "national origin" only after a few years in the States. Indeed, in a few cases, the immigrants developed this national sense before it was widespread in their homeland, and immigrant organizations sometimes used their influence to trigger nationalistic movements in the Old Country. There is an impressive list of nationalistic movements either triggered here or so actively supported here that their success without the aid of immigrant communities is doubtful: Professor Handlin mentions the movements for independence or national unifi-

cation among Irish, Polish, Italian, Magyar and Czech immigrants, and concludes that a more recent such movement, American Zionism, “. . . therefore, falls into a well-established American pattern.”⁷

Now our good immigrant historians have studied this process in detail for many years. Their findings should be of great use to Indianists faced with a situation at least in some ways similar, as Indians, newly arrived in the city, discover that there are not enough members of their tribal group around to make a satisfactory splash, and that, moreover, even friendly members of the dominant culture think that an Indian is an Indian. What Thomas says about the action of Indian groups in the city sounds enough like what the immigrant historians have pointed out to make one think that the experience of other groups in the past should be useful to students of the Indians as well as to Indian leaders themselves. He says that Pan-Indianism is nothing less than “the attempt to create a new ethnic group, the American Indian.” The “surprise” in that statement cuts in several directions. On the one hand, for those of us who are not Indianists, it is surprising because we had always thought Indians *were* an ethnic group. On the other hand, it is surprising because those of us who have not been in touch with the work of students of the immigrant did not know that many of our ethnic groups are largely self-created. Indians, of course, hardly ever did think of themselves as an ethnic group. Many, perhaps most, still do not. But younger Indian leaders, many of whom seem to be behaving in something very like the classic manner of third-generation immigrant people, certainly have ethnic identity in mind: one has only to examine those papers in this collection by or about Indians active in the movement.

It is true that the cultural products of such bred-in-exile nationalism are not especially “authentic.” The generalized Plains-Indian symbols which have developed in much of the country are not “real” in the sense that one tribal group used all of them in aboriginal times, but they are real enough as they are presently used. They carry cultural weight for the people who are using them. Thomas’ language again is appropriate: “Indians began to feel comfort in each other’s presence in order to bolster their identity. . . .” Like the generalized national traits which many of the immigrant communities developed to provide themselves with an identifiable “center,” such things are, if not authentic, of great “symbolic comfort and reinforcement for identity as Indians.” Wayne Wheeler, in describing a Scandinavian community-in-exile in self-conscious search for authentic symbols of the old national identity, tells how members of the community decided to paint buildings in the traditional Swedish red, but missed the right color, or referred with pride to the tradition of the *kaffe kallis*, but generally used the German term, *kaffee klatsch* instead,⁸ producing a genial and well-intentioned but generally stumbling replica of the old ways. Wheeler, of course, is describing not the artificial homeland created by first-generation immigrant groups banding together, but rather the sentimental constructs of the third generation.⁹

“Generation” has no such clear meaning for Indian groups, but Indian leaders

will find Wheeler's ideas instructive. "Pluralism" is popular today; national hospitality to cultural pluralism has enabled people to announce with some pride that they are American Poles, Jews, Italians, Irish, Germans, Negroes and so forth, and to make symbols of that identity visible to the community at large. How visible one makes them depends on which group one belongs to and where one is, but the tendency is easy enough to document. The obvious pride of the stand-keepers at a Mexican fair in Topeka, Kansas; the comment of the Chinese friend who takes you to his parents' home "so you can see what *real* Cantonese food tastes like"; the guest at the Jewish wedding who acts as master of ceremonies to the visiting *goyim*, proudly explaining to them the mysteries of the *vorspeisze* table; the Italian who tells you that nobody in Italy eats the kind of pizza that is served in your neighborhood pizza parlor: these things suggest both pride in the heritage and a kind of superficiality. Food is an important cultural fact, but too easy a symbol to be totally convincing. Eating tacos does not make one a Mexican, nor chopped liver a Jew, and in point of fact different kinds of pizzas are eaten in different parts of Italy. This kind of pluralism is, to use Wheeler's term again, "romantic."

Certain aspects of Pan-Indianism described in this collection have the ring of the same sort of artificial construct. For small groups, cut off from their tribes, and living in the big city, such constructs are probably necessary. Deliberate and conspicuous display of them, though, makes them look less like the products of

The Dream of the Indian Flag

The dream of the hopeful Houma man described by Ann Fischer—" . . . a huge flag waving over the shore line with an Indian chief's head in the position where the field of stars should be"—seems symbolic of the manner in which contact with the dominant culture generalizes Indian culture. The Houma at present have no chiefs; Fischer doubts that they have ever had any strong central authority. Moreover, they are, racially, not especially "Indian-looking." Even white neighbors cannot identify them by their looks. So a dream of the head of an "Indian chief" is a Pan-Indian dream. Significantly, it is projected directly upon the dominant culture: it replaces the stars in the American flag. Discovery of the culture as a whole immediately suggested kinship with other Indians, probably because the Houma alone form too small and ill-defined a group to stand out in so vast a nation. But *Indians* suggests something much grander; one could feel a certain pride in identifying with *that*. Since I don't know how sophisticated the fellow was who had the dream, I hesitate to go further, but the substitution in the field of stars is suggestive. Does the dreamer have a vague notion of a sort of imaginary Indian "state," a soul-satisfying entity within the larger nation?

first-generation grouping than of the third-generation's sentimental attachment. Probably they are a mixture of the two: Indians grouping together because, like the first generation immigrant, they need the larger identity; Indians showing off their Indianness because the country is officially more hospitable to pluralism than it was in the era of big immigration. The information in the essays suggests that not many Indian groups are yet quite so comfortable in their Americanness as the characteristic third-generation group, the one so completely assimilated that it can afford to show off what little it can scrape up of its old identity, but clearly they are moving in that direction.

Tourists and Pluralists

If young Indian leaders are successful in creating a kind of generalized Indian identity, the creation of that identity in itself may, paradoxically, be a major step in the direction of assimilation. The Indian is not only faced with many of the same pressures which caused other minorities to develop a national sense, but also with some special ones. Tourism, for instance, is, for many reservation Indians, a major (or even *the* major) source of needed income. But tourism exerts a powerful unifying force. The most successful Indian attractions are those which strike the visitor as most "Indian," and "Indian" of course does not mean "tribal." It means "Pan-Indian," the only kind of Indian the tourist recognizes at sight. Tourism as a force is unique in that it operates not on the relatively acculturated Indians in the communities of the dominant culture, but rather directly upon the far more conservative people still seeking to live by tribal ways. We would expect, of course, that generally the most conservative groups would be less interested in tourism than others, but in point of fact there are strong pressures, economic pressures especially, which make tourism attractive. The Potawatomee people whom Clifton describes, "beating on drums and generally acting like Indians so as to earn a little spending money," were conservatives. Besides, adventurous tourists presumably tend to seek out what is "quaint," and the more conservative, the more "quaint." Once discovered by tourists, the "quaint" enclave is liable to respond to the pressures. A colleague of mine and his wife hired a teen-age girl from Haskell Indian Institute to do housecleaning. She told him that her interest in the world outside of the rather impoverished reservation where she and her family lived had first been aroused by conversation with the children of a family of tourists which had come to the reservation. One would like to hear a tape recording of that conversation. Even months after coming to Haskell, this intelligent youngster was still bewildered by the elementary artifacts of the larger civilization. The couple for whom she worked, for example, had to take her downtown to Penney's to help her buy a pair of red rubber boots in anticipation of the winter snow. She had never seen snow and was enormously excited by the prospect of a snowy winter; indeed, she was to some extent frightened by it and asked such questions as whether you could actually go outside while the snow was falling. Her shyness in pur-

chasing the boots I do not fully understand, since she was perfectly capable of handling most of the little social situations which arise on a shopping expedition. What she said was that she had never purchased boots before and wouldn't know what to say. Even more striking was her behavior one day while cleaning the kitchen floor. The lady of the house walked in and the two chatted, inevitably about the climate. "It's so cold up here you don't need refrigerators, isn't it?" she said, standing directly in front of the family's big Kelvinator. This anecdotal evidence is intended to suggest that if the girl's background was not extremely conservative (and I really have no evidence about this), it was at the very least extremely isolated and, by our usual standards, underprivileged. The girl felt strongly that the process which had led her to Haskell had started with her conversation with the visiting tourist kids on the reservation.

Haskell, of course, was designed to speed the assimilation of Indians into the larger culture. As several of our authors note, however, because it brings Indians from many different areas and tribal origins together, it has become, instead, a hotbed of Pan-Indianism. But I am not sure that the two are not different sides of the same coin. As we have noted, for many minority groups, one stage of the process of assimilation has been marked by the self-conscious creation of a "foreign" national identity around which smaller provincial groups can cluster. Thomas' suggestion that Pan-Indianism is in fact the effort to create an "ethnic identity" for just the same reason would seem to indicate that wherever this type of Pan-Indianism is strong, the process of assimilation is quite far advanced.

I would also guess that the pattern of the "generations" which we discussed in connection with other ethnic groups is, in the case of many Indians, telescoped. With immigrant groups, that is, there is a real difference between what the first generation has often tried to do (band together in organizations such as the Sons of Italy) and what the third generation has done (invite you to Grandma's for some "real Italian cooking"). Both kinds of action are highly self-conscious, but the first shows the self-consciousness of the newcomer, huddling together, so to speak, for warmth, whereas the latter demonstrates the self-consciousness of an American secure enough in his national identity to show off the peculiarities of his heritage. When the young Haskell girl discovered that the Institute sent out groups of dancers for parades, civic celebrations and half-time shows at football games, she wrote home to her mother on the reservation to have her mail her buckskins. I have no idea whether this outfit was in any sense really "native" to her tribal group (she was from the Pima reservation), but she said that she had worn it both in "real" celebrations and in dances put on for outsiders. At Haskell she was delighted to discover that it was a symbol of Indianness. I think that I detect in this story and in her emotional response to the dress and what it meant elements of the flavor of both kinds of ethnic group behavior. On the one hand, the dress was a sign that she belonged to a group larger than her tribe. On the other hand, she was quite happy to wear it on occasions specifically designed to show off her Indianness.

If I am right that this generational process is in fact telescoped, the causes of the telescoping would be easy enough to explain. In the first place, the pattern of Indian self-discovery always involves gathering people in from a wide area—to the Indian enclaves of cities, to the Chicago Indian Conference described in Lurie's essay, to Haskell Indian Institute—whereas the other ethnic groups characteristically began their American careers in relatively concentrated communities (urban ghettos, or, as in the case of Scandinavians, rural areas) from which they moved *out* to meet the surrounding culture. A second cause is, as I have suggested, tourism. Harry Golden's stories of life in the New York ghetto are charming enough, but they do not include accounts of groups of tourists coming through to see quaint native ceremonies. And only Leonard Bernstein has been able to make anything romantic of the quaint puberty rites of the contemporary Puerto Rican community in New York. Indian ways, in contrast, strike everyone as suitable tourist fare. In short, had the Indians at the start been physically clustered together so that it would have been impossible for them not to know one another, and were they not subjected to the generalizing pressure of tourism, something like the pattern of generations which one sees in other ethnic groups might have developed.

Tourism apparently short-circuits the process. One thinks of that famous Chinese restaurant in Boston "where the Chinese workmen themselves go to eat," where "they don't have chop suey and that kind of phoney stuff—they eat salt fish and rice, and octopus, and the menu is in Chinese." As soon as the word spread about the place, of course, this "quaint" enclave of "Chineseness" began to respond. The menu is in English now, and no doubt chow mein and Chinese lanterns will soon follow. The conceptions of the dominant culture help to define the symbols of the enclave. The situation of the Indian in this regard is similar enough to that of other ethnic groups to give the social scientist a certain amount of predictive power, but it is different enough to remain interesting and continually surprising.

Perhaps if one studied one small group of Indians which had recently come into much more intimate contact with modern American culture, one would indeed discover the usual pattern. Certainly it is obvious that different portions of it are appearing among different Indian groups. What makes the situation complex is that Indians are simultaneously at all stages of contact and acculturation.

Nancy Lurie suggests, at the close of her paper, that the real Indian "renaissance" may well be "the change in the non-Indian world in regard to the Indian world rather than the reverse." Educated to the belief that pluralism is American and good, members of the non-Indian world are disposed to nod approvingly at signs of Indian uniqueness. But the Indian, in responding—is not this what he always wanted?—is demonstrating that he understands the value-system in which his peculiarity has become admirable. In the very act of glorying in the heritage which sets him apart, he in effect assimilates, for "glorying in one's heritage" is a respectable activity within the value system of the pluralistic society.

Deward Walker's essay suggests another and equally paradoxical example of how efforts to retain a distinctive identity may in fact raise the risk of losing it. To fight the battle to remain distinct, the Nez Percé discovered that they needed a strong central tribal organization. But a central organization is foreign to the oldest tribal traditions, and for years a battle had been waged against such a centralized administration. Strangely, it is a group which remains on the reservation, in most ways the most conservative group culturally, which now supports the work of the "executive committee." In order to make the contact with the dominant culture which is necessary to insure the preservation of the privileges which enable the tribe to maintain its own identity, the tribe must adopt media of communication which the dominant culture understands and approves. The executive committee described in Walker's paper is one such medium; the lawyers discussed in Dobyns' are another. Marshall McLuhan has explained to us all very adequately how such media of contact eventually change the entire character of civilizations.¹⁰ Even the relatively isolated enclave which desires to retain something of its isolation and a good deal of its peculiarity must to some extent assimilate in order to achieve its goals. "Want to catch a fish," the old Indian I fish with tells me, "think like a fish." If you want to deal successfully with the dominant culture, you have to learn to think its way. In doing so, you of course become less Indian.

How Different is an Indian?

Having granted at the outset that the case of the Indian is different from that of any other minority in the United States, it is worth asking just *how* different the Indian experience really is. If we examine any other group, will we not find that it, too, is unique?

What a queer set of problems is posed, for instance, by those oddballs, the first English settlers. They are the only immigrant group which did not encounter in the New World an established Western culture, and were thus denied the character-forming experiences of discrimination and economic exploitation. Deprived of the wholesome loneliness of the newly-arrived stranger, never having been called dirty, sub-human or different, this underprivileged group even had to wait until a war and the arrival of strangers made it possible to form its equivalent of the Sons of Italy, the D.A.R. One wonders whether we will ever succeed in assimilating it into the texture of American society.

Plainly the various tenets of the immigrant hypothesis—the connection between American social attitudes and "uprootedness," the three-generation pattern and so forth—do not operate perfectly in the case of every minority group in the country. In fact, though it is a good hypothesis, it probably fits no one group perfectly. The three generation pattern works best in the cases of the groups which came in the large late nineteenth and early twentieth century migrations, though even there if you examine any one community you will find countless exceptions and peculiari-

ties. Certainly the pattern works poorly or not at all in the case of groups which were in only slight contact with the dominant culture, or which came before there *was* one.

Similarly, one can't really say that all groups carried the same melioristic vision of America. The Puritan view of the New World as a model theocracy which would inspire others has more in common with the views of the nineteenth century utopian communities than it does with that of a peasant fleeing famine. This is not to say that the peasant had no share of the "American dream." Especially if he had been influenced partly by the various propaganda organizations which wanted to attract immigrants, he certainly did, though his visions likely ran less to the city upon a hill than to the land of milk and honey. Refuge, not social revolution, even if refuge in a sense implied a revolution for him.

This is in no sense an attempt to mount an attack upon the tenets of the immigrant hypothesis. Indeed, in assembling these tenets from different portions of the work of different historians, I'm being a little unfair to it even in synthesis. It is really a set of generalized observations, each of which seems to have pretty broad application among immigrant groups. I am sure its creators make no claims for its infallibility. It might be best, in fact, to regard "the immigrant" which it defines as what the sociologists call an "ideal-type,"¹¹ and not to expect to find perfect embodiments of it. Our discussion of it is intended to suggest that, though the Indians are not immigrants, the immigrant historians' way of accounting for facets of national character really fits them no less poorly than it does some immigrant groups.

Thus the Indians, though certainly unique, are no more unique than many other groups, whose variety is so bewildering that one hardly knows how to organize a list of some of their differences: Japanese who shared American ideas of effective social organization, but who had the bad fortune to be here during the Second World War; German Forty-Eighters who came with a social philosophy *more* radical than that of the dominant culture; Cubans who fled Castro's revolution, but many of whom were rather cynical Batista-ites; Scandinavians who went directly to rural areas and never underwent the big-city ghetto experience so formative for millions of their contemporary co-immigrants; Mennonites who came over wealthy, not poor, and who already had been immigrants in their previous homes; Jews, who lacked a "national origin" in the usual sense; Negroes who carry the peculiarities of having come involuntarily, having been slaves, and being racially visible; groups too small to produce the expected first-generation "grouping"; people who trickled in over so many years that they hardly constitute groups at all; groups which came to escape a repressive social system; groups which attempted to reproduce the old system on the new soil.

In an undergraduate seminar I had occasion recently to send my students out to familiarize themselves each with one minority group or community, and to see how what they found squared with any of the analyses of the American experience

they had read (they were familiar with those of Alexis de Tocqueville, Crèvecoeur, Turner and Handlin; some also knew Veblen, Parrington and others). What a hard time these good students had. Without summarizing their evidence it is possible to suggest what they ran into with a simple list of some of the groups they read about: a group of Latvian settlers in Wisconsin, the Boston Irish, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethern, Mennonites in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Louisiana Creoles, the Greek community of Tarpon Springs, Florida, Chinese in San Francisco. It is hard to think of anything one can say about the peculiarities of the Indian situation that does not apply to one or more non-Indian group, except that important matter of having had to leave the old country. The Indians, too, were uprooted, though it is possible to argue that they were uprooted by the dominant culture, and thus are unique in that the nation to them has been menace, not refuge. Even this, however, does not leave them all alone, for Americans at times have forcibly uprooted non-Indians (Negroes and Japanese, for instance) as well. There are, moreover, other groups which regard the nation's activities as "menace": Mormons who fled its customs and authority, and continue to fight its attempts to impose its ways; Quakers and the members of other pacifist churches; Mennonite groups which fight against continued education for their children. Thus the argument that Indians are unique among American minority groups in that they alone have not wanted to be assimilated also fails to square with the facts. Many groups have not wanted to be assimilated. Almost all have wanted to maintain a separate identity, and some have wanted virtual isolation.

Because the essays in this issue test the hypothesis that Pan-Indianism is increasing, each makes the point that Indians were originally not one people but many. This fact—for culturally it is a fact—is used as part of the argument for Indian uniqueness. No other minority group, the reasoning goes, was not a group. I am not sure that this is true, and if it were, I am not convinced that it would really matter. The dominant culture will act upon any Indians it encounters, just as it acted upon other strangers to its ways and values. Indian reactions will be different as Indians are different and as the methods of contact are different. All that this line of reasoning proves is that each Indian group originally met the dominant culture independently. To the extent that each group is still independent, it is now being subjected independently to the usual pressures which the dominant culture puts upon groups new to it. Saying that Indians are many and not one in no way alters the nature of those pressures. Even the idea of "many, not one" may not apply for long if the National Indian Youth Council succeeds in producing unified action and response.

Besides, for what it is worth, even Indian diversity is not really unique. Many other groups which we think of as homogenous have not seemed so to their members. Some groups have squabbled bitterly; others have not had enough in common to sustain even squabbling. There are marked cultural differences between people who came from different parts of what is now the same country (Italians,

for instance), or between those who came at different times or for different reasons (Germans, for example, or Cubans), or between those whom we group together (like the Jews) who did not even come from the same country.

It is just as easy to list things which Indians have in common with other American minorities as it is to list ways in which they are different.

- To start with something basic, Indians feel that they are unique and different. So has every other group which ever underwent the process Indians are now undergoing. Both are correct. Each group is unique. They have the feeling of uniqueness in common.
- Indians have a culture (or cultures) which, unmodified, is ineffective in the modern nation. Modification is inevitable, but also painful. This has been true of almost every other group, too.
- Factors beyond Indian control have made almost any of the old ways of gaining a living unattractive. Tribes have been uprooted, placed in undesirable locations, persecuted and in other ways subjected to destructive pressures. These things have happened to the ancestors of so many Americans, though, that it is the commonality of experience which is one of the great sources of sympathy, present and potential, for Indian causes.
- Indian experience is tribal. So is the historical experience of several minority groups: Eskimos, Polynesians in Hawaii, Negroes.

Even in the smaller areas of specific experiences there is much in common.

- Indian reaction to the schools, while varied, is often strongly reminiscent of immigrant reaction to the same institution. Immigrant reaction is also varied, and many of the variants are those described in the essays which follow. Those children who are handicapped are so in the same manner in both cases. In both, one encounters parents who regard schools as a threat to the old ways or the old identity. In both, one finds others who regard them as a quick way to achieve success in the general culture. And in both there are many whose feelings are deeply ambivalent.
- In both cases, there was "grouping" during the primary confrontation with American culture: the Indian alliances in the face of white settlement, the development of a generalized Plains Culture and the Pan-Indian religious movements could be compared roughly with first-generation immigrant behavior.¹²
- There are, as we have noted, several things going on today among those Indians in close contact with the rest of us which remind us of what we are told other groups have done to define their own identities. Intertribal activities of various sorts have developed, and even certain purely tribal behavior sounds distinctly familiar: the group, for example, which never had a reservation but which is actively engaged in creating one by purchase of land. Other groups of newcomers to the culture in comparable situations have built fraternal organizations or painted their homes red.¹³

This list will not prove anything, but it does suggest that there is more potential for understanding and fellow-feeling than we may suspect.

The Survival of Indian Identity

It is, one supposes, absolutely inevitable that Indian contact with the dominant culture will continue to increase. Even those Indianists most deeply committed to the preservation of the old cultures are also in favor of many measures which accelerate the process of change. Everyone, for example, wants better medical care for Indians. Wherever we find a high incidence of tuberculosis, poor sanitation or an abnormally low life-expectancy, we quite rightly want something done. But all such concern is based on peculiarly Western philosophical attitudes towards the value of a human life, towards nature, towards thinking itself. A doctor does not proceed by sympathetic magic; he is a Western rationalist who thinks in terms of chemical cause and effect. The universe to him is not, as it is in most non-Western cultures, a unified spiritual whole to be influenced symbolically. He looks for specific chemicals which will kill specific bugs. Introduce a doctor into a non-Western culture and you introduce an agent as dangerous to the old ways as a TV set.

TV or any new medium is, of course, a much more obvious culture-changer, and new media are inescapable with the United States. A remote area may escape electrification for a long while, but it can hardly escape some contact with a highway or a school or money, and these are media of the dominant culture as effective as any others. The horse radically transformed the cultures of Plains Indians almost by itself. Because of its introduction, these tribes changed so radically that they were very different peoples by the time extensive white contact appeared. More modern media are even more ubiquitous; Indian culture will not escape them. And old patterns will inevitably crumble, as they have crumbled in the past. The Indian cultures we know today are different from those of the past. They would have been so even in isolation, since culture is seldom static, but much of what we and Indians think of as most characteristically Indian is in fact an adaptation in one way or another to culture-contact.

Moreover, Indian attitudes toward their traditions, such as they are, vary wildly from group to group, and, as our contributors show, even within the same tribe. The tribe which gets its ceremonies out of an anthropology book is perhaps funny, but demonstrates very well how tough it is to pin labels on any traditional behavior once the media of the dominant culture begin to operate. In one tribe, "real Indianness" implies membership in a Christian church; in another, churchgoers are finks, and the conservatives preserve a version of the old (but how old?) religion. In yet others, Indian identity centers around the Pan-Indian Native American Church, with its crazy-quilt pattern of special revelation, peyote and fundamentalist protestantism.

Will Indian identity survive? Indians and Indianists point with pride to the fact that "spin-off"¹⁴ has been much smaller than the older Indian administrators hoped, but everyone knows that real isolation from the general culture is becoming

increasingly unlikely for any group. This does not necessarily mean loss of identity, however.

Indeed, even should all Indians lose their special legal status, Indian identity would not necessarily be threatened. Many Indians who have lost it or who never had it are still clearly Indian. There is no way to predict to what extent Indian identity will continue to receive legal and legislative support. The government has not yet resolved the uncomfortable conflict between "rights" and "what is right" in the case of the Indian. The policy of termination¹⁵ discussed in several of our essays appeared during a period when "rights" appeared to have the upper hand. Under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson the policy has moved toward "what is right," but the issues involved are obviously too complex for anyone to feel that present attitudes are very secure. People of liberal sentiments grow increasingly confused as they learn the facts in the case of the Indian. But whether the special legal status of the Indian survives or not, the question of the survival of the identity will increasingly be in the hands of individual Indian people.

My guess, on the basis of the evidence in these essays, is that many Indians will opt for continued association with their heritage. Indian identity itself, of course, will change in the process. Culture-contact should tend to generalize it, though the result does not have to be one kind of identity. Some writers, for instance, refer to "Pan-Pueblo" identity and "Pan-Plains" identity because there is evidence that these terms now mean something. But though the pattern of association with the Indian and the dominant cultures will vary with each person, the Indian portion of it will, I think, come to look more and more like the "ethnic" identities which other groups have achieved. Indians will come to see themselves as another peculiar bunch in our curious federation of peculiar bunches. Pride is still possible within such an identity: pride, and understanding, as well. And no one should worry over-much about the "authenticity" of the symbols of that identity. Indian symbols will be as authentic as anyone else's, and as functional.

All of this is probably for the best, not because our culture is "better" than any one of theirs, but because it is better for living in this country right now.

STUART LEVINE
San José, Costa Rica
September, 1965

Footnotes:

1. He is right or wrong depending on how one does define "Indian." If the definition is sufficiently broad to include the very large number of people with some Indian blood who are now a part of the general society, he is quite right.

2. From *History of the United States of America During the Administration of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. I, Chapter 6. Reprinted in Milton R. Stern and Seymour L. Gross, eds., *Nation and Region 1860-1900* (New York, 1962), 492-510. 501.

3. *Ibid.*, 501-502.

4. A fine review of what we know about millennialism in America is David E. Smith's "Millenarian Scholarship in America," *American Quarterly*, XVII, 3 (Fall, 1965), 535-549.

5. *Ibid.* See especially 539-542.

6. Rachlin, discussing the situation in Oklahoma, scrupulously says, "Factions interact to create Indian culture. This is not a Pan-Indian culture. Tribal identification remains the predominant theme of Indian society." It depends, of course, on what you mean by "Pan-Indian." In the loose sense in which we are using the term, what Rachlin describes is certainly Pan-Indian: there is an "Indian Culture" produced by factional interaction. Pan-Indianism, used this way, does not preclude strong tribal ties. What matters is that there are, as Rachlin says, "inter-tribal activities." Members of one understand that there are others and that they have some things in common. If we disregard this semantic problem, we find that Rachlin's arguments are nicely reinforced by Thomas, who quite agrees that, in comparison with Indians elsewhere in the country who are in such close touch with urban centers, eastern Oklahoma Indians are quite tribal.

7. *Race and Nationality in American Life* (Garden City, New York, 1957), 194-195.

8. Wayne Wheeler, "Frontiers, Americanization, and Romantic Pluralism," *MASJ*, III, 2 (Fall, 1962), 27-41. See especially 35ff. Although designed to point out the usefulness of oral tradition to the general historian, a recent paper by Richard M. Dorson provides interesting examples of the manner in which elements borrowed from another culture can become a functional part of the culture of Indian groups. Dorson argues for two theses: first, that oral material can be factually valuable in establishing historical events; second, that it is invaluable for understanding the people among whom it is current. For our purposes, however, what is most interesting is his illustrative material on Indian groups, for it demonstrates the existence of a sort of Pan-Indian folklore, much of it borrowed from and/or having to do with the dominant culture. "Oral Tradition and Written History: the Case for the United States," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, I, 3 (December, 1964), 220-234.

9. The characteristic pattern among immigrant groups in the American environment is, roughly, as follows: The first generation, seriously disoriented in the new and foreign culture, clings to those aspects of the old culture which offer at least some security. The attitude of this generation toward the new homeland varies widely from group to group and from individual to individual. Yet though their commitment may be quite deep, their need for elements of the old life is almost always strong enough to make them feel a certain hostility toward certain agents in the new environment which are making their children very different than they were. The school in particular is feared. For the second generation, the foreignness of the parents is to some extent something to be embarrassed about. They would like, at least in obvious and visible ways, to appear characteristically American. With the third generation there often develops a kind of fondness for the old national traditions, although this is seldom accompanied by any deep understanding of what they represented. A member of the third generation will often tell you that his parents knew the old language but never spoke it, whereas he does not know it at all, but tries very hard to use the few expressions he knows as often as possible. A good starting point for discussion of this process, recommended by Wheeler, is Marcus L. Hansen, "The Problem of the Third-Generation Immigrant," in *Augustana Historical Society Publications*, 1938, reprinted as "The Third-Generation American" in Edward N. Saveth, ed., *Understanding the American Past* (Boston, 1954), 384-405. A study which illustrates to what extent the three-generation pattern is an oversimplification is Irvin L. Child's analysis of second-generation Italians in New Haven, *Italian or American? The Second Generation in Conflict* (New Haven, 1943).

10. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York, 1964).

11. Wayne Wheeler gives a good definition of "ideal-type" for us non-sociologists: he says that it is "a generalized, abstract concept which is ideal, not in the sense that it is good and to be striven for, but in the sense that it is an idea. It is a mental construct which cannot be found in reality but which is based upon reality. Good examples already used and well accepted in history and economics are 'feudalism' or 'economic man.' An ideal-type is an abstraction from reality and can be used as a measuring device for the viewing of reality. But it is not a statistical average." "Frontiers," 27.

12. In neither case was this the first recorded example of mutual action. As Witt explains, in some areas, intertribal organization had developed before first contact, and of course, to pick the obvious parallel, there was European nationalism quite unconnected with American influence.

13. Among some tribes which already have reservations, the attitude toward them of people who live elsewhere is often comparable: the reservation is a place to visit on vacations, to bring the kids to so they will have some feeling for the older ways, and, sometimes, a nice place to live in retirement.

14. Movement from tribal groups into the general culture.

15. That is, "getting the government out of the Indian business," and leaving Indians in exactly the same legal status as other citizens.