

National Coexistence Is Our Bull Durham: Revisiting “The Indian Today”

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Introduction

Although much has changed in Native Country since the special issue of the *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* on Native Peoples was published in 1965, one factor that has not changed is whites' ambivalence regarding the nationalisms of Native Peoples. This inquiry into white ambivalence toward Native nationalism comes from analyzing Nancy Oestreich Lurie's essay, "An American Indian Renaissance?" in that issue. Not unlike today, where Native Peoples' nationalism pushes for decolonization and where western ideology and interests resist it, Lurie described a similar pattern forty years earlier: whenever nationalist movements, such as Red Power and Black Power, challenged their ideology and interests, whites experienced discomfort or felt threatened. Indeed, the essay's title implicitly conveys apprehension.

For understanding white ambivalence and its subsequent inertia toward decolonization, Lurie's essay proves instructive. First, I discuss the social and political climate in which the special issue of this journal was conceived and eventually published. Second, to show how Native nationalism has affected and altered my generation's perceptions, I give an overview of events occurring between the issue's initial publication and its fortieth anniversary. Third, I revisit the persistent—albeit wrong—mainstream view that confuses racial mi-

nority and ethnic status with nationality. Often mainstream thought constructs Indian identity around race or ethnicity and, as a result, shifts the discussion from nationalism to equal rights or social equality.

Nationality, by contrast, keeps the discussion focused on a peoples' right to co-exist. These distinctions are paramount to understanding what was happening within Native Country as well as to explaining why whites, and perhaps also minority and ethnic groups, find themselves on the margins when Native Peoples gather to discuss human rights violations or self-determination. Fourth, I discuss nation-building—what Lurie identified as conscious nationalism. In particular, Lurie's and others' uneasiness over nationalism suggested that whites could not be counted on as solid allies, since Native nationalism insists on revitalizing the nation-to-nation relationships that originally existed. That is, it insists on decolonization.

Finally, I discuss decolonization itself by reframing the critiques of whites. Here, reframing simply involves switching the voices. This exercise in voice reversal reveals that decolonization becomes palatable to the mainstream when whites, rather than Native Peoples, make a nationalist claim.

“The Indian Today”

On 3 November 1964, millions of white voters who had cast their ballots for a number of federal and state offices were in psychological turmoil, if not fear. The presidential contest between two white men, Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson, had loomed large in the minds of these voters.¹ On the one hand, Johnson promised to fight poverty, aggressively promote civil rights, and stop the spread of “communist aggression.” On the other hand, Goldwater believed in personal initiative over government-sponsored social programs. He held fast to the Color Line that W.E.B. Du Bois had articulated six decades earlier,² and, as Johnson portrayed him in the now infamous campaign advertisement regarding weapons of mass destruction, Goldwater seemingly entertained a less restrictive nuclear use option against any threat to white interests. As for the populace, whites proclaimed the virtues of “American freedom and democracy” yet denied the realities of both to nonwhites, thus exposing themselves as rank hypocrites. The struggles of nonwhites within and without the United States against white racism and political suppression revealed high levels of dissatisfaction with the status quo.³ This presidential contest, then, involved more than which party was going to control the White House; it also mirrored white uncertainty and anxiety as nonwhites charted their own political and national destinies.

In this climate, the *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* released a special 1965 fall issue, “The Indian Today.” In the midst of transformation, the whites' radar screen registered a peculiar signal coming from Native Country. Indeed, the journal's editors reported that, “something important is happening in the Indian world, *although we cannot name it.*”⁴ Thus, wanting to know what

was generating this signal constituted the motivation for this special issue. Of course, as today, if the whites of the 1960s had pointed their radar in the right direction all along, or if their radar had been pointed in the right direction and if they had paid closer attention, the special issue could have been a definitive—and perhaps an affirming—treatise on Native Peoples' respective nationalisms, which was in fact the peculiar signal. Instead, the journal's lead essay by Nancy Oestreich Lurie revealed how perplexed whites were by this yet-to-be understood phenomenon.

A decade prior to the special issue, this important "something" was being forged in the hot ovens of termination. Fortunately, since then, several sources by Native and other authors provide a good treatment of the resurgence of Native nationalism. For example, between 1955 and 1964 the Haudenosaunee Confederacy opposed water or waterway development projects within their homeland: the Knizua Dam Project (Seneca Nation); the Niagara Power Plant Project (Tuscarora Nation); and the development of the St. Lawrence Seaway Project (Mohawk Nation), and their activism has been well documented.⁵

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy's proactive opposition to these colonial assaults caught the attention of Native Country, indicating that other Native Peoples were finding other ways to reject colonial suppression. Taking their cue from the Confederacy, other Native Peoples followed suit with their respective acts of resistance. By the time the journal launched the project that culminated in "The Indian Today," this resistance had become bold, imaginative, and increasingly visible. For example, calling attention to the parsimonious 47 cents/acre that the Americans offered for the land they stole from California Indians, a "handful of Bay Area Sioux . . . chartered a boat, landed on Alcatraz on the blustery Sunday morning of March 8, 1964, and [drove] claim stakes into the ground under the Sioux Treaty of 1868."⁶

Also, in early 1964, Native Peoples in Washington State conducted numerous fish-ins to exercise their treaty right to fish the rivers. These fish-ins directly challenged the arbitrary imposition of state game laws, and state harassment and individual acts of white brutality against Natives became common sport. Because the fish-ins touched a politico-legal core concerning treaty rights, they resonated throughout Native Country, and Native Peoples came from every direction to participate. The National Indian Youth Council (NIYC), founded in 1960 by a handful of Native youth from various parts of Native Country, gained legitimacy by participating in these fish-ins and acquired newfound respectability among a broad spectrum of Native Peoples. As expected, the NIYC's Sovereignty First! activism against colonial encroachment prompted more than a few whites derisively to label such Natives as Red Muslims.⁷

Moreover, in July 1964, as Lurie was sending out a questionnaire "seeking to explore the contemporary Indian scene[.]"⁸ the Oceti Sakowin Oyate (herein Oyate) was in the final four months of a fierce, six-and-a-half-year battle against political incorporation by an all-white South Dakota government. Through Public

Law 83-280 (PL 280), the 1953 U.S. colonial law that gave states authority to unilaterally impose their laws without obtaining the consent of Native Peoples, South Dakota's white population had inched closer to illegally annexing Oyate homeland, thus intensifying Oyate resistance. Despite repeated testimony by the Oyate against the law's application, the state disregarded our testimony and invoked PL 280—albeit unsuccessfully—on three separate occasions. On its final try in March 1963, South Dakota's all-white legislators pushed through a measure that would “let” South Dakota assume both civil and criminal jurisdiction over Lakota and Dakota reservations and consequently eliminate our laws and abolish our governments. This measure was met by a focused and brilliant campaign led by several Oyate leaders, the likes of which the Oyate had not seen since the days of the American-Oyate War (1851-1890).⁹ Strategic planning, tactical discipline, and resourceful thinking by these leaders eventually led to a resounding defeat of the state law in a risky but politically necessary statewide vote in November 1964.¹⁰

In nearly every case of Native resistance between 1950 and 1965, Native Peoples were responding to a familiar colonial pattern: calculated efforts to advance white economic or political fortunes at the expense of Native communities. Native Country's refusal to yield to the colonizers' “march-of-progress” dismayed them. As Lurie indicated, whites fumbled over understanding their (Natives') behavior because, perhaps, it was so at odds with the image of Indians as “conquered peoples.”

Precisely because these and other watershed developments violated white colonial stereotypes of Natives, Lurie could characterize them only as “a social movement.”¹¹ For our colonizers, this social movement was not about the national coexistence of Native Peoples but had to do with “a heightened desire for Indian identity coupled with vocalized insistence on recognition of the right . . . to persist as distinctive social entities.”¹² Distinctive social entities? Describing our respective struggles for national coexistence against American colonialism as akin to a 1960s social movement is like comparing the African National Congress' 1960s struggle against South African apartheid as little more than an affirmative action strategy.

Obviously, the efforts to reduce the intergenerational struggles of Native Peoples against colonialism to familiar categories—social movements—fails to capture what was happening and does little to fully engage the imagination. Specifically, Lurie's description fails to convey the deep resentments held by any colonized peoples toward their colonizers, and it fails to identify their even deeper determinations to be free. It is not surprising, then, that after almost four decades we find ourselves revisiting this terrain.

Revisiting the Indians Today

When I first examined the 1965 special volume, the cover struck my attention. Something about the grainy, color picture of traditional dancers and the

arbor seemed familiar. Curious, I found the blurb about the picture and discovered that it was taken during a wacipi on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. Looking at the picture's background, I wondered if that wacipi was held at Soldier Creek, Spring Creek, or Grass Mountain. Reminiscing, I thought about how much has changed in Native Country since that picture was taken. I was a nine-year-old Lakota growing up on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation when the special volume was published. At that time, playing with friends in the prairies of the Northern Plains was our only concern. When the older community members saw us—a new generation of Lakota children—playing, perhaps they took heart, given the price we had paid and continue to pay for Oyate resistance. This resistance included their recent 1963-64 successful fight against state jurisdiction. Unlike 75 years before at Wounded Knee, Lakota children were not fleeing for their lives from American soldiers.

Moreover, when the special issue was being developed, I can say with some satisfaction that we Lakota children played our part in the resistance. Whenever whites came through our reservation, they would invariably want to engage us. Some deep instinct would, however, collectively kick in, and we found ourselves running from them. As we ran away, we could hear them shouting, "Come back! I (or we) won't hurt you!" Perhaps they would not have hurt us, but we learned early on to put some safe distance between them and us. Of course, little did we nine-year-olds know what breathtaking developments awaited us between the journal's special issue and its anniversary issue, forty years later. How could we have imagined what was to follow and the impact on our lives?

- The 1968 founding of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and its call for full autonomy for Native nations. Undoubtedly, such a call pulled at our collective young spirit formed from ancient memories.
- Alcatraz 1968 Occupation would clear our minds about the value of direct political action in contrast to peaceful "social protests."
- Vine Deloria, Jr.'s 1969 bestseller *Custer Died for Your Sins* gave us an intellectual agency so robust that it is considered a classic to this day.
- The 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties and the subsequent Native occupation of the BIA headquarters in Washington, DC, drew us out of our colonized slumber.
- Wounded Knee II in 1973 made us take a hard look inward and begin the work of decolonizing ourselves, personally and nationally.

- Leonard Peltier's 1977 trial reminded us of the stakes we face as Native patriots.

Moreover, the whites' 15-year push for termination was being circumscribed by the 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act (IRCA), indicating that strong Native resistance could have a somewhat salutary effect on Americans.¹³ United States' laws began to address the "Indian Problem" but, unfortunately, not the Native Question. Some of the more familiar measures still in effect in Native Country from the 1970s include: the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975 (ISDA), which "allowed" Native Peoples to contract federal services; the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA), which "allowed" Native governments to intervene in cases where Native children were being adopted into non-Native homes; the Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (IRFA), which only raised awareness among federal agencies about their need to be "sensitive" to Native religious practices; and the Tribally-controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (TCCAA), which provided "financial support" for the then-fledgling Native college movement.

In the four decades following the release of the special issue, the consciousness of Native Peoples throughout the United States, especially those born in the 1950s, has been radically transformed, so that we no longer think strictly in colonized terms. While terms such as "Indians," "American Indians," "Native Americans," or "First Nations" are still used to refer to us, this hemisphere's original inhabitants, these terms are now giving way to decolonizing terminology, such as Native or Indigenous Peoples. More importantly, we are quickly shedding the so-called tribal names imposed by our colonizers and embracing the terms we have always used to refer to ourselves—our nationalities—before contact. Despite our transformation since the 1960s, though, we are well aware of how colonialism affects our psyche, as, for example, in our growing acceptance of and participation in the Americans' political system.¹⁴

A Renaissance of Familiar Labels

When the special issue was being developed, Lurie decided to call what was transpiring throughout Native Country a "renaissance," although she was not comfortable with the term. To investigate this renaissance further, she sent out eighty inquiries on 20 July 1964 to "anthropologists, government personnel, church workers, and individual Indians" who were familiar with Indian affairs to solicit their views on that important yet undefined something.¹⁵ Eventually, eleven articles, written mostly by whites, were published. Of those eleven articles, Lurie's "An American Indian Renaissance?" proved the most revealing. As the guest editorial consultant and co-editor of the special issue, her article (a synthesis of the responses to her statement and questionnaire) reflected white ambivalence about what was happening among Native Peoples in the mid-1960s. Lurie herself, for instance, admitted in her statement that the term renaissance

may not capture what Native Country was going through: “Ironically, while Indians enjoy far more general esteem and sympathy than do Negroes, *many white Americans*, including people active in aiding the Negro cause, *either find the Indian movement difficult to comprehend or simply accept as valid.*”¹⁶

Not a *Racial* Minority

Of course, Native Peoples enjoyed white approval more than Blacks during this period. Although an increasing percentage of the Native population was living in urban centers due to a white-sanctioned relocation policy,¹⁷ “Indians”, unlike “those Negroes,” were not overtly taking their respective national struggles (or Red Power as it is collectively called) into the streets demanding equal rights, wanting to eliminate racial discrimination, and wanting to end racial segregation. No, our struggle was of a far different nature: we were asserting our right to national coexistence. We challenged the overall colonial project, which was designed to save the man or woman by killing the Native within. In short, we remain committed to stopping the colonial obliteration of our nationalities. As a basic human—not civil—right, this struggle to maintain our national characters requires now, as then, that we examine our oppression through a different lens.

An important aspect of our right to coexist as peoples or nations necessitates negotiating the white rapids of identity politics imposed by non-Natives. The term “minority” is frequently used to refer to quantity or numbers of people, but in most scholarly discourse it is used to reflect the power differential between non-whites and whites that favors the latter. For the minority label to have any meaning when used with respect to Native Peoples, it must employ the race-based concept of blood quantum, namely, the degree of non-Native (almost exclusively white) blood a person possesses. Of course, blood quantum has the deleterious effect of normalizing thousands of Native Peoples to the colonial status of Indian, American Indian, or Native American, omitting the rich context of distinct nationalities and homelands.

Including Native Peoples under the category of a “*racial* minority” has distorted how whites and others viewed the emerging “Indian” movement. This category inadequately frames a complex nation-to-nation dialogue into one where whites assume that Natives, like other minorities, basically desire the same legal rights as and social equality of (or with) whites. So long as Native Peoples can be forced under the status of *racial* minority, the realities of our treaty rights—which include acts of self-governance, the call for self-determination, the preservation and enhancement of established homeland boundaries, national allegiance to one’s people in the form of language maintenance, and adherence to cultural traditions—vanish.

Moreover, because—then, as now—national coexistence defies white notions about racial integration or desegregation, more than once Lurie noted that whites were usually at a loss when Natives stated that they wanted a physically separate space and to be left alone.¹⁸ Consequently, given what was at stake for

Native Peoples, we had no choice but to contest the inappropriate label of racial minority; otherwise race, not nationalism, would dictate the agenda of the “Indian Problem.”

Finally, if the label “Indian” is synonymous with race, then perhaps all Native Peoples have had good reason to fear. Whereas Native Peoples choose their spokespeople to act on their behalf or else be rejected, racial minority leadership has all too often been co-opted by whites in power. As Vine Deloria, Jr. noted in 1969, frequently minority leadership is beholden to media coverage that is controlled by white interests.¹⁹ Also, because minority and other oppressed communities organizing around social problems must seek financial support to advance their agendas, they must often go before private or state agencies where whites hold influential positions. Whether a minority group or leader receives good press or assistance depends on the “compatibilities” between minority demands and colonial ideologies.

Of course, Native Peoples are not immune to white co-optation, as both the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) and the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) demonstrate. Nonetheless, Native communities have a recognized political status concomitant with territorial integrity and recognition. These attributes provide accountability to Native communities in ways that other racial minorities lack. For example, almost without exception, reservation leaders are elected to represent their people in dealing with outsiders. Without this affirmation from within the group, media exposure or outside support cannot simply anoint some person a leader and expect the reservation community to acquiesce. This power disparity has meant that minorities could not afford to lose any payoffs by being uppity with, and thereby offending, whites.

Hence, it may not have been comforting to Native Country when Lurie noted approvingly the trend of more Natives attending college, saying “it is worth noting that a surprisingly large number of younger Indians who are deeply committed to the idea of Indian identity are seeking degrees in anthropology!”²⁰ Contemplating Lurie’s observation, one wonders what possible good could come of young Indians committed to the *idea* of an Indian identity? Native identity *is not* an idea but a way of life. Indeed, a few years following the release of the special issue, Vine Deloria, Jr. strongly critiqued Lurie’s discipline for what it failed to do for Native Country in its most trying times.²¹

Not Ethnic Enclaves

Another label familiar to whites but inappropriate when applied to Indians was and remains that of ethnic group. During the 1960s when racial minorities, Blacks in particular, dramatically came to the attention of white society, descendants of voluntary, mostly European, immigrants also proclaimed their “minority”—albeit ethnic group—status. Hundreds of hyphenated ethnic groups sprouted, such as the Chinese-, French-, German-, Greek- Irish-, Italian-, Japanese-, Korean-, Lebanese-, Spanish-Americans, and so forth. Ethnicity of this

kind is mostly related to ancestry with cultural identifiers varying in degrees from language proficiency or adherence to customs of one's national origin to complete ignorance of their national origin.

Nearly a generation later, Stephen Steinberg would argue that these so-called ethnic groups engaged their "nationality" in ways that were more symbolic than real—St. Patrick's Day, Columbus Day, or food festivals. Steinberg noted, for example, the personal experiences of some Scottish-Americans returning to Scotland and how their return became indicative of nationality turned ethnicity in the United States.

The incongruity between the culture of the home country and that of hyphenated Americans is also pointed up by the experience of a group of affluent Americans of Scottish descent who returned to Scotland in 1977 for the International Gathering of the Clans. Replete with kilts and bagpipes, they spent two weeks searching the countryside for their roots. According to *The New York Times*, the Americans were met with ridicule, not only for making a spectacle of themselves, but also for fraternizing with the wealthy clan chiefs whose ancestors had driven their ancestors out of Scotland.²²

Any post-third-generation descendent—the now hyphenated American—of a voluntary immigrant today will tell you that going back to the old country only reminds them how superficial their ethnicity is compared to the complex nuances that genuine or authentic nationality embraces. Assimilating into white society proved, for whatever reasons, a stronger incentive than any desire for almost all voluntary immigrants to maintain their respective nationality.

Were Native Peoples to dissolve as well behind the distinguishing hyphen? Several of the individuals contributing to the special issue believed so;²³ but interestingly they did not attach a colonial tribal name to the term American (Nez Perce-American, Iroquois-American, Houma-American, Lumbee-American, Cherokee-American, and so forth). Instead, the writers mostly invoked the more homogenizing term, Indian, as having sufficient power to explain Native Peoples. Lurie obviously carried a message that Indians were, not unlike other minorities or ethnic groups, joining the rash of recent activism that, among other things, promoted racial or ethnic pride. And she used many phrases to express her point, such as "a heightened desire for Indian identity;"²⁴ "emphasis on Indian identity in terms of reactivating or encouraging perpetuation of tribal languages, customs;"²⁵ "Indian racism takes a distinctive form in arguing against assimilation with non-Indians;"²⁶ "Indian distinctiveness is stressed culturally and historically;"²⁷ and "Stress on tribal identity as inseparable from Indian identity."²⁸ What about our nationalism as the real fuel for the Indian movement? Lurie found that this question, with its deeper insights into the Indian movement, either confused or disturbed whites.

A Conscious Nationalism is Nation-building

That whites failed to comprehend a different social reality emerging from Native communities becomes apparent when Lurie distinguished among four frequently overlapping categories: nationalism or supratribalism (described as Indians first, nationality or tribalism second);²⁹ pan-Indianism or intertribalism (described as tribal Indians on relocation); tribalism or parochialism (described as Indians predominantly having small-town, or, in this case, reservation views); and country Indians or provincialism (described as Indians who keep to themselves).

At the nationalism and pan-Indianism levels, one would expect to find not only more urbane whites but also the cultural gap between Indians and whites to be narrower. At the tribal and country Indian levels, one finds the converse to be true: more local whites and a wider cultural gap. Of course, these levels were fluid because, as Lurie noted, Natives floated in and out of each level or, depending on the circumstance, occupied more than one simultaneously. As a result, whites were frequently treated to, and left in a purple haze by, a dazzling experience of Native level-shifting within the Indian movement.

For example, from classic Native stories about white researchers swarming into the homelands during the summer, one could easily imagine an inquiring white, who, wanting to know about the Indian movement, traveled to a reservation and hobnobbed with a tribal or country Indian. Soon after the white's arrival, the Indian asks the new arrival if she or he has any Bull Durham, the cigarette tobacco of choice during the 1960s. To the inquisitive white, her or his newfound tribal or country Indian simply wants some Bull Durham to smoke. But before the white can offer to buy some Bull Durham at a border town store—white-run, of course—the tribal or country Indian turns staunch nationalist, persuading the white to purchase the Bull Durham (tax free perhaps) at the tribal smoke shop as a show of white solidarity or support for Native sovereignty. Later, at a social gathering on the reservation, the tribal or country Indian once again turns staunch nationalist. He or she now becomes a 49er-stomping pan-Indian, wanting to share the Bull Durham with other Indians and the by-now-frazzled white. While investigating the Indian movement during his or her month-long stay on the reservation, the white finds this scene repeated many times.

Later, when questioned by other whites about his or her excursion among the Indians, the new “Indian expert” reports on his or her adventures but says little about the Bull Durham—only that he or she purchased some from time to time but refused the Indian's offer to share it, because, well, he or she is, after all, a non-smoker. Of course, at this point, all the listening whites agreed it was downright rude of the Indian to assume everyone smokes.

What does this story of level-shifting have to do with Lurie and the special issue? Like Bull Durham tobacco, our nationalisms are expressed in a multitude of ways that are mostly missed or ignored by the uninitiated. For Natives, our

right to exist as a people is as sacred as tobacco. In other words, our distinct nationalisms are our Bull Durham.

During this challenging period of social change in the United States, the respective nationalisms of Native Peoples seemed particularly offensive to white sensibilities. Well-meaning whites were not especially happy whenever Native consciousness moved away from civil rights and other social issues (*i.e.*, the War protests, women's reproductive rights, etc.) and toward decolonization.³⁰ As a result, whites either became lukewarm in their support of the movement or, worse, highly critical of it. Indeed, strong nationalist sentiments expressed by most Native Peoples exposed the inherent colonialism of whites,³¹ especially when they referred to Native nationalisms as being provincial and unconstructive:

A number of respondents recognized the presence of such conscious nationalism, but *feared or disparaged it because it involved more noise than direction, because it lacked clear-cut objectives, or because it played upon a generalized shared hostility toward larger society rather than positive features of a shared Indian identity.*³²

The emphasis on “positive features of shared Indian identity” that Lurie described framed how a non-Native (or, in some cases, Native) person might perceive the Indian movement's aims or goals. Depending on his or her level of discomfort with those goals, a non-Native would interact positively or negatively with Natives. As for Natives, embracing a racial or ethnic orientation likely landed them in the civil rights camp fighting for social equality or equal rights; they became “good Indians” in white-speak.³³

Comparatively, a nationalist perspective landed Natives in the sovereignty camp, which championed self-determination or treaty rights, both core components of nation-building; these individuals ostensibly became “bad Indians.” These two movements—civil rights and Native nationalism—against white oppression sometimes crossed paths, but they went in separate directions. It is at these crossings where the differences in the two movements can be most clearly seen: human rights versus civil rights, treaty rights versus equal rights, and national political status versus racial or ethnic status.

One well-known crossing was the 1964 fish-ins in Washington State. Lurie explained to the journal's readership that the “Indians were not protesting abrogation [sic] of general civil rights to fish in given areas; rather, they were demonstrating for special rights as Indians to fish irrespective of game laws.”³⁴ Her analysis carries an implicit white bias, because she framed such protests as Natives wanting to be exempt from laws that applied to Americans. According to this analysis, Native activists were contravening the white understanding that minorities demand equal application of the law, desegregation, and social equality.

However, in his account of these Native-led fish-ins, Stan Steiner, in the late 1960s, challenged the academy by providing an alternative, albeit rare, white view.³⁵ In truth, Steiner argued, by applying its game laws “indiscriminately,” Washington State violated established treaty law, according to which fishing is a national, not an individual, right. By failing to explore this elemental truth, the academy failed to grasp one of the most crucial implications of nationalism: no matter how much the languages, customs, norms, and values may differ from the mainstream, every people has a right to a national existence.

At the time of the special issue, Native Peoples in the United States had not yet widely internationalized the emergent Indian movement. Since then, however, we have been coupling our efforts to assert our right of co-existence with other self-determination movements of colonized peoples throughout the world. Subsequently, we have read similar European critiques of the decolonization movements of the Third World that parallel Lurie’s analysis.³⁶ Thus, whenever a colonized population asserts its national status and refuses to abide by a constructed colonial status, the contentious political question of the colonized people’s national status, as in our case, remains problematic for colonizers.

Finally, as the 1960s were coming to a close, Native Peoples had, as mentioned earlier, successfully waged a 15-year struggle against termination. Termination was the whites’ policy to obliterate a long-standing politico-legal—albeit imperial—status accorded to Native Peoples: “domestic, dependent nations,” first promulgated in Supreme Court Justice John Marshall’s racist 1831 opinion in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*.³⁷ In the main, this status had preempted states from exercising their power in Native Country. White courts had to acknowledge that this status affords Native Country a political status higher than that of the states.³⁸ Because this status theoretically describes a nation-to-nation relationship between Native Peoples and Americans, mutual consent—despite white misconduct and the history of one-sided legal fictions notwithstanding—remains this relationship’s core principle.

Decolonization Remains the Native Goal

Of course, this core understanding of mutual consent between nations changed dramatically in August 1953, when the American government enacted Public Law 83-280 (PL 280), the infamous termination law, which allowed any state to assume jurisdiction over Native lands without the consent of Native Peoples. The 1953 law flagrantly set aside the 12-decade-long federal doctrine of “domestic, dependent nations,” for that of states’ rights, an argument that southern states typically invoked against federal intervention to maintain white hegemony. Not until 1968 was PL 280 finally amended to require Native consent as a prerequisite to operationalizing this law.

Though Native Country incurred some political fatalities—the terminated tribes³⁹—Native Peoples emerged more determined than ever to prevent states

from invoking this law and also to protect their communities from further white intrusion.

By 1965, this determination on the part of Native Peoples was, as Lurie pointed out, already bothering white society:

Those [whites] who begin to grasp what Indians are *really* after often feel uncertain or indignant about the moral, ethical, and political connotations of the *Indian definition of rights* under the American form of government. Simply put, many Indians want to exercise the right to be Indian, maintaining and protecting their distinct communities and socio-racial identity, even by safe-guards if possible, while availing themselves of material and educational advantages enjoyed by the society at large.⁴⁰

Unfortunately, whites continue to appeal to this worn-out line of reasoning, claiming that Natives want it both ways. That is, Indians want to live on the white peoples' dole (wardship or guardianship), but they do not want to lift a finger to help pay their fair share (Indians not taxed) or to assume the responsibilities of American citizenship (special rights versus equal rights). Indeed, in 1998 a white individual who saw the Indian movement threatening core ideals of Americanism echoed that same concern voiced over thirty years before: "The highest aspiration of the Indian sovereignty movement is to develop tribal utopias that are completely independent of the United States, while retaining access to the social and financial benefits of American citizenship."⁴¹ Why does exercising the right to be Indian while enjoying the "advantages" that white society supposedly has to offer strike whites as so incongruent?

If we switch the previous quote by Lurie so that Indians rather than whites made this claim, we begin to appreciate how changing a voice's color can make a world of difference: the absurd appears sensible. Indeed, the wanting-it-both-ways complaint is transformed into a palatable, even laudable, "having a say in your own destiny" argument.

Those [Indians] who begin to grasp what whites are *really* after often feel uncertain or indignant about the moral, ethical, and political connotations of the *white definition of rights* under an American Indian form of government. Simply put, many whites want to exercise the right to be white, maintaining and protecting their distinct communities and socio-racial identity, even by safe-guards if possible, while availing themselves of material and educational advantages enjoyed by Native society at large.

This conceptually difficult role reversal transforms the meaning of white rights into an acceptable and legitimate argument against Native colonization and domination of white people.

Enjoying the privilege that comes from racism and colonialism, Lurie was well aware of the reception Native Peoples could expect from whites, well-intentioned or not, if they pushed an anxiety-inducing definition of national coexistence and national rights:

... even those non-Indians able to tolerate this [Indian] definition [of rights] and sympathetic to it frequently find they cannot offer Indian people their whole-hearted support or sincere assistance because they consider such a goal unfortunately but ultimately unrealistic and impossible to achieve.⁴²

Her point shows how little support exists even among well-informed or friendly whites for Natives intent on pursuing their inherent self-defined rights.

Forty years have transpired since Lurie's essay informed Native Peoples that a nationalist agenda would be unacceptable to the mainstream. And while the record of the last four decades supports Lurie,⁴³ the record equally reveals that nationalism not only remains but has increased intensity as a force in the lives of colonized Native Peoples. Perhaps this is why the journal has returned to this difficult subject, and the journal should be commended for doing so. Undoubtedly, this long-standing Native Question about the American occupation in our respective homelands needs to be addressed, so I ask: Can you as Americans offer your whole-hearted support and sincere assistance to furthering our decolonization? Do you still consider such a goal unrealistic and impossible to achieve? I can assure you that there are nine-year-old Native boys and girls waiting to hear answers to these questions.

Notes

1. Barry Goldwater overwhelmingly carried the popular vote of five Deep South states: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Nationwide he received over 27 million votes to Johnson's 43 million. That the race card had a significant role in the 1964 presidential contest cannot be ignored.

2. See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994) in which he stated that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line,—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (9). *The Souls of Black Folk* was first published in 1903 by A.C. McClurg and Co., Chicago.

3. See Stokely Carmichael's and Charles V. Hamilton's *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) for a treatise on Black nationalism in the United States. The call for Black nationalism constituted one expression of dissatisfaction with the racial status quo. The Civil Rights Movement was another. Internationally, American intervention in Third World countries like those in the Pacific Rim (Cambodia and Vietnam) or in Central and South America (Guatemala, El Salvador, etc.) sparked decolonization movements among the marginalized populations to rid themselves of U. S. puppet régimes.

4. Quote from inside back cover of *Mid-continent American Studies Journal* Volume 6 (Spring 1965). Italics mine.

5. Laurence M. Hauptman's *The Iroquois Struggle for Survival* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986) describes how, in securing these projects, the Americans ran roughshod over the legitimate land claims of the Seneca, Tuscarora, and Mohawk Nations.

6. Adam Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz! The Indian Occupation of 1969-1971* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1992), 15.

7. Reported by Nancy Oestreich Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 6 (Fall 1965): 36. See also Alvin Josephy, Jr.'s *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971): 2.

8. Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" 25.

9. The military component no longer defines this war as it did from 1851 to 1890. However, an armed conflict briefly flared in 1973 on the Pine Ridge Reservation and lasted 71 days.

10. Whites held a numerical majority and could have easily engaged in another land grab by assuming jurisdiction over the reservations. However, the Oyate used a pocketbook argument, convincing white voters that in assuming jurisdiction the state would have to appropriate "their tax revenues" to replace federal revenue allocated to the reservations.

11. Rejecting the term social movement to characterize the Indian movement is a deliberate choice. In their study of four different social or protest movements—unemployed workers, industrial workers, civil rights, and welfare rights—Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) argue that "Prevailing definitions [of social movements], by stressing *articulated social change goals* as the defining feature of social movements, have had the effect of denying political meaning to many forms of protest" (4, emphasis mine). For example, the authors contend that massive societal transformations, such as school truancy, rising worker absenteeism, mounting applications for public welfare, or spreading rent defaults, went unnoticed, politically, since these forms of behaviors were deemed as social problems of one sort or another (5).

Piven's and Cloward's claim concerning definitional deficiencies of social movements frame how inadequate the term is in describing what we experienced as colonized peoples and our responses to it. On the one hand, by mainstream's conventions Indians were, with very few exceptions, thought of as deviant, having antisocial behaviors (introverted for instance) and thus viewed as unable to "make it" in white society. In short, we were perceived by whites mostly as a worst case welfare problem. Moreover, as a result of genocide over the centuries, Native Peoples did not have a critical demographic mass to attract mainstream's attention. In other words, our voices were virtually silenced.

On the other hand, articulating social change goals to the existing social (and one might add political) order is problematic. By choice Native Peoples did not enter into the Americans' social contract. Not entering into the social contract involved maintaining pre-white contact (or traditional) ways of life—fishing or hunting, gathering plants or performing ceremonies, speaking our languages, selecting leaders, and so forth. Of course, the practice of these various traditional activities were—despite treaty provisions to the contrary—often deemed illegal or perceived as socially or politically unacceptable to our colonizers. And, indeed, if the colonizers caught Natives performing or practicing their traditions, Natives could expect retribution from the colonizers. Hence, to twist colonial oppression to construe it as a social movement seems disingenuous.

12. Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" 35.

13. Lurie points out that whites, other minorities, and perhaps more than a few Indians confused Native "protests" or resistance with the Civil Rights Movement. The ICRA suggests as much. *Alcatraz II* (November 1969) distinguished Native rights from civil rights, however. Paul Chaat Smith's and Robert Allen Warrior's *Like A Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996) and Kenneth S. Stern's *Loud Hawk: The United States versus the American Indian Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994) both illustrate the sea change in Native Country from that of being largely perceived as a national minority to that of being perceived as sovereign peoples. President Nixon's 8 July 1970 special message to Congress on Indian affairs indicated that this sea change within Native Country also percolated through the mainstream. Many of the policy changes enacted by Congress in the 1970s reflected a diminution of the termination-era mentality of forced political and cultural incorporation of Natives to that of recognizing Native Peoples' "right of self-determination."

14. David E. Wilkins, in *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002) addresses the implications of participation by Natives in the American political system. While conventional wisdom touts this participation favorably, it comes at a cost: namely, Native nationalism.

15. Lurie, "An American Renaissance?" 33. According to Lurie, 31 people responded. Of that number, 19 filled out her questionnaire.

16. *Ibid.*, 26.

17. The BIA's April 1970 publication, *Answers to your questions about American Indians*, discloses that "approximately 200,000 Indians have moved to urban areas in the past 10 years" (23). The Native population in the United States was estimated at 551,669 in 1960 and 827,091

in 1970. Arguably, in 1970, almost one-fourth of Native people resided in off-reservation urban centers such as Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Albuquerque, Portland, and Dallas.

18. Lurie noted non-Native confusion when they learn Native Peoples resist “absorption” into mainstream society, especially when other minorities desire the full application of civil rights (26)—a more palatable model for absorption. After several years on the public lecture circuit, Lurie concluded that whites believed Native Peoples to be “vanishing.” At worst, the vanishing race idea meant an acceptance of the inevitable: the physical extinction of Native Peoples. The softer version of this ideal is Natives assimilating into mainstream society. Incredibly, Lurie also reported that the general public was puzzled [!] over the fact Native Peoples were “not vanishing as rapidly as expected” (30). Nonetheless, the acceptable solution proposed by whites for non-vanishing Natives was assimilation. This solution illustrated how they could not see other alternatives like national co-existence—a nation within a modern state.

19. See *Custer Died for Your Sins* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988 [1969]), 194. In Chapter 8, “The Red and The Black,” Deloria examined the political and cultural differences between Natives and Blacks and then analyzed how those differences influence the relationships between Blacks and whites and Natives and whites.

20. Lurie, “An American Indian Renaissance?” 46.

21. See Chapter 4, “Anthropologists and other Friends,” in *Custer Died for Your Sins* for a Native critique of anthropology’s (and by extension the academy’s) irrelevance to Native Peoples. Indeed, a generation later, Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman, both anthropologists, commented on the timelessness of Deloria’s critique in *Indians & Anthropologists* (Tucson: University of Tucson Press, 1997):

This piece was a biting and serious—if rhetorically humorous—indictment of the anthropological project as it pertains to American Indians. Deloria represented the anthropologist as an urban, overly intellectualized, insufficiently humanized academic who descends on Indian country every summer to confirm and reproduce essentially self-conforming, self-referential, and self-reproducing closed systems of arcane “pure knowledge”—systems with little, if any, empirical relationship to, or practical value, for real Indian people (3).

22. Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America* (Boston: Bacon Press, 1981), 62.

23. In the United States, “ethnicization” remains a salient point of contention between non-Indians and co-opted Indians and Native Peoples concerning the Native Question. Perhaps an unintended irony of the special issue concerns the parallel between the post-World War II decolonization movements led by peoples from Third World countries and Native movements transpiring within the United States. For example, Allen Buchanan in *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) noted that modern states tend to treat national minority groups as cultural rather than political groups (20). Decolonization literature reveals that modern states realize that peoples—not people—can assert self-determination as a right and therefore disrupt a modern state’s colonial project. And while the journal should be applauded for examining the state of Native Country in the mid-1960s, its overall discourse perceived Natives as a national minority in a cultural or racial context rather than in a political one. For instance, Stuart Levine reflected this perception about Native Peoples in his essay, “The Indian as American,” arguing that Natives invariably will be as other ethnic groups in the United States. Others who were not as straightforward as Levine nonetheless operated from within the same national minority framework. Also, Nancy Oestreich Lurie’s use of sociological language—“ethnic insularity” (31); “distinctive social entities” (35); or “local ethnic content of Indian tribal identity” (44)—underscore an ethnic or racial context in describing nationalistic movements among Natives. Of course, this critique regarding the Native ethnicization raises another issue: the academy’s silence surrounding the genocide of Native Peoples. For a treatment concerning this silence by the academy, see Alexander Laban Hinton’s *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

24. Lurie, “An American Renaissance?” 35.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, 36.

27. *Ibid.*, 37.

28. *Ibid.*

29. This form of nationalism or supratribalism implies that a Native person suppresses his or her specific peoplehood (e.g., I am a [Native nation]) for that of personhood (e.g., I am a human being who happens to be Native). In other words, individuals organizing themselves around common interests that have nothing to do with either who they are as Native Peoples or that have nothing to do with Native Country—they just happen to be Native. Perhaps another way of thinking about this kind of nationalism or supratribalism is how a person identifies him or herself.

For example, there is a difference between a person who identifies him or herself as an *indigenous* lawyer, *indigenous* professor, or *indigenous* spokesperson than, say, a person who identifies him or herself as a lawyer, professor, or statesman or woman of "Indian" descent. These examples may appear very nuanced to non-Natives but are discernible within Native communities.

30. The case in point is the Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) of 1968. The five or six years leading up to the ICRA disclose that whites were more concerned about politically forcing civil rights upon Native governments than enforcing treaty protected rights against other whites. The Washington Fish-ins of 1960s and the Haudenosaunee's fight against water development projects in the mid-1950s to early 1960s are examples.

31. One of the reviewers of this article questioned the appropriateness of my use of the term "most" to characterize the response of Native Peoples. My decision to retain the term is deliberate because Native Country's response against the Termination Era (1953-1968) really is foundational for the claim to using "most." As the meaning of termination began to really sink in (i.e., the literal extinguishment of Native government as a viable institution and the "denationalizing of Native Peoples"), we fought against its application. In that fight, the documented record shows that almost all of Native Country wanted to neutralize Termination by incorporating Native political consent as a prerequisite. Indeed, it is this evidence that the contributors of special issue seem to have completely missed or misunderstood how Termination policy informed Native Peoples' acts of resistance throughout the 1960s (and today).

32. Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" 43.

33. A few characterizations reported by Lurie are recognizable as good Indians: that "well-dressed and well-educated Indians are able to find acceptance in local white communities (in ways Blacks cannot);" that a Native male would accept the nickname of "Chief" as a compliment by non-Indians; and that Natives who assimilated and took pride in having beat the white man at his own game were "perturbed and distressed that they are rejected as models for other Indian people to emulate." These characterizations resonate with whites. They are in accord with their mythical view of a self-made man or woman despite setbacks. An Indian person coming from this mainstream perspective may find native nationalism difficult to embrace and may disavow it, saying perhaps that fighting for civil rights is more realistic or achievable. On the other hand, Billy Frank, Jr., reiterated a story showing how, in a 1964 winter fish-in, Natives were framed as "bad Indians:"

When Hank Adams [an Assiniboine] first came to Frank's Landing in winter 1964 to support the treaty fishermen who were publicly branded as "renegades[,] we were cautionary. But after a newsman asked our most prominent leader whether "Indians believe they have a right to destroy the last fish. . . . He [Hank Adams] had injected to declare: No one has that right. . . . The issue is not 'the last fish,' but the state's allowing non-Indians to catch 13 million salmon last year while throwing Indians into jail for catching any—and prohibiting some treaty tribes from harvesting any salmon or steelhead at all" (*Indian Country Today*, 11 January 2006).

This exchange between Natives who have a treaty-based human right to fish in order to sustain their communities and non-Natives who have no such standing other than to fish commercially and for sport speaks for itself on the matter of what is a "bad Indian."

34. Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" 26.

35. *The New Indians* (Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1968). In particular see Chapter 4, "The Red Muslims," and Chapter 5, "The Fish-in within the Fish."

36. John H. Bodley in *Victims of Progress* (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999) provides an excellent analysis of western development among non-western peoples (i.e., globalization) and development's colonial antecedents. Moreover, during the Cold War (1945-1990), the ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States framed each other's response to indigenous decolonization movements. Thus, there were several cases in which a non-western people's decolonization program was labeled either as a communist plot by the United States and its allies or as a capitalist plot by the Soviet Union and its allies. These two completing ideologies revealed assumptions that the "West knows best" for nonwhite populations.

37. *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. 1, 24 (1831).

38. The phrase, "higher status than states," was first used in a 1959 United States Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision, *Native American Church v. Navajo Tribal Council* (272 F.2d 131). In a freedom of religion controversy between individual Natives and a Native government concerning the religious use of peyote and a Navajo law prohibiting peyote use, the court, relying on previous legal precedents, such as *Worcester v. Georgia*, declared that the First Amendment is only applicable to Congress and the states:

They [tribes] have a higher status than that of states. . . . No provision in the Constitution makes the First Amendment applicable to Indian nations nor is there any law of Congress doing so.

39. There were six states (Alaska, California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Wisconsin) in which the United States mandated, with few exceptions, the termination of the Tribes located

within those states. For example, in Minnesota 10 of 11 Tribes (Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Nett Lake, White Earth, Upper Sioux, Lower Sioux, Prairie Island, and Prior Lake) were terminated. State civil and criminal jurisdiction replaced federal and tribal jurisdiction under Public Law 83-280.

40. Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" 27. Italics mine.

41. David Price, *The Second Civil War: Examining the Indian Demand for Ethnic Sovereignty* (St. Paul, MN: Second Source Incorporated, 1998), 7.

42. Lurie, "An American Indian Renaissance?" 27.

43. See Robert A. Williams, Jr.'s *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, And The Legal History of Racism in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) for a treatise on how judicial racism adversely affects and frustrates Native Peoples' goal of self-determination.