

# A Discussion of Scholarly Responsibilities to Indigenous Communities

EDITED BY JOYCE ANN KIEVIT

As the editor of *H-AmIndian*, a joint project between the History Department at Arizona State University and the Center for Humane Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences Online housed at Michigan State University, I have discovered that discussion threads go in cycles. Sometimes the listserv has a lively exchange of ideas between scholars on the subjects of American Indian history, culture, ideas, and professional behavior. Inexplicably, for stretches of time the listserv is quiet, as if all subscribers are on vacation. In an effort to stimulate conversation during one of these silent periods, I asked each of my four graduate student editors to formulate a timely and provocative question that they would like to see discussed by the *H-AmIndian* subscribers. Once I approved their questions, they all invited four scholars to respond to their queries.

James Precht drew the short straw and was the first to undertake the challenge. After extensive discussions with fellow students and faculty, he settled on the following question: “To what extent do scholars have a responsibility to the Indigenous communities they study, and how can they fulfill this responsibility?” He invited Professor Devon Mihesuah of Northern Arizona University, Professor Clara Sue Kidwell of the University of Oklahoma, doctoral candidate Daniel Cobb of the University of Oklahoma, and doctoral student Matthew Makley of Arizona State University to write responses to the question.

The discussion that followed illustrated that there are significant disputes between scholars and American Indian communities over scholarly research and Indigenous cultural heritage and intellectual property rights. Devon Mihesuah argued “Scholars absolutely do have a responsibility to the people they study” and “authors need to be accountable to

tribes.” She encouraged “more practical and useful studies instead of more-of-the-same about topics we’ve seen repeatedly.” Angela Cavender Wilson agreed with Mihesuah, stating “scholars should engage in areas of research dictated by an Indigenous agenda.” Clara Sue Kidwell stressed the importance of equipping students with the proper information so that they have a “comprehensive understanding of contemporary American Indian life and identity.” She also stated that it was the responsibility of historians to document Indian survival “so that it will continue in the future.”

While most contributors seemed to agree in theory with Mihesuah’s ideas, several indicated that it might be difficult to follow her suggestions. Christian McMillen questioned who would determine what constituted practical and useful studies. Karl Evans and Andrew Fisher had concerns about intratribal factions. Fisher pointed out that just figuring out who should be consulted is a major dilemma: “The assumption that certain individuals, even a tribal government, can speak for the entire ‘tribe’ seems itself redolent of colonialism.” Dana Magliari expressed concern that a tribally approved project may not fulfill the requirements of the academic discipline.

While some discussants had concerns about Indian groups controlling research activity within their communities, Jeffrey P. Shepherd described his positive experience working with the Hualapai Nation. He made it a point to meet with the tribal council and attend other gatherings in the nation. He was able to assess what they wanted investigated and managed to get 95 percent of the tribal members interested in the project. Daniel M. Cobb and Matthew Makley also stressed the power of oral traditions and community cooperation to present a finely tuned, sensitive, and accurate portrait of an American Indian community. The Shepherd, Cobb, and Makley essays indicated that working with the tribes enhanced the quality of their work and benefited the groups they examined.

Although I was happy that the discussion generated a lively exchange of ideas, I was stunned that out of 1,038 H-AmIndian subscribers, less than ten people decided to take part in this important discussion. From those who did respond, however, it became clear that there are basic differences among academics over what constitutes proper research. We must find solutions to these differences so that academics and tribes can work together to solve problems for their mutual benefit.

H-NET (<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/>) has graciously granted permission to have this discussion reprinted in *American Indian Quarterly*. This

discussion can also be located in the H-AmIndian online discussion log (<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~amind/>).

#### QUESTION

To what extent do scholars have a responsibility to the Indigenous communities they study, and how can they fulfill this responsibility?

From: Devon A. Mihesuah

Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: H-AmIndian Discussion Series—Discussion #1: Scholarly Responsibilities to Indigenous Communities

This is an important question, one that cuts to the heart of what I believe is the most serious problem in Native studies today. It also is an ethical and moral issue that is sidestepped by many scholars who focus their careers on studying Indigenous peoples. Scholars absolutely do have a responsibility to the people they study. This is a strong statement and one that needs to be discussed—again.

I and others have already said this in numerous publications, but clearly we need to keep repeating ourselves: Degrees, grants, fellowships, awards, and book contracts have been bestowed upon hundreds of scholars who write about Natives, and there is no question that many scholars prosper from their work, while for the most part the subjects of their studies do not. Vine Deloria Jr. stated in 1991 that “we need to eliminate useless or repetitive research and focus on actual community needs; it is both unethical and wasteful to plow familiar ground continually.” Many scholars in the various fields of Native studies have not paid attention to his concern.

Poverty, disease, depression, and frustration are common throughout many tribal nations, and urban Natives (including Native academics) also are stereotyped and treated as second-class citizens. Because of these realities, it is fair to ask how many authors of scholarly works about Natives attempt to find solutions to the problems Natives face. If essays are going to continue to be reprinted in anthologies, then why can we not see more collections of papers devoted to the historical roots of why Natives are in their current situations, in addition to proposed solutions to their concerns? Many of the “powerhouse,” award-winning scholars refuse to

use Indigenous oral testimonies, do not visit tribal lands, and have no idea of the hardships that Indigenous peoples face. Unfortunately, many of these scholars mentor most of the people reading this, and they control dissertation, search, promotion, tenure, and awards committees. They illustrate the actuality that “highly educated” people are insulated from many of the realities of life.

Several authors in *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians* have already said that authors need to be accountable to tribes. This anthology has sold over 5,000 copies, so I know good and well that scholars interested in studying Natives have read it. I also know this because of the deluge of e-mails and letters I have received since 1998 thanking me for producing it. Those people supportive of finding decolonization, empowerment, and nation-building strategies, however, are not those in charge of the aforementioned committees, and they certainly have no input as to what publishing houses spew forth. Instead of taking the concerns expressed by Indigenous intellectuals (“warrior scholars,” as Kanien’kehaka scholar Taiaiake Alfred calls them) to heart, leaders and supporters of the status quo (and this includes some Natives) have evidently decided to take a different route. It is not at all surprising, then, that the essay in *Natives and Academics* that has been the most quoted—“American Indian Studies Is for Everyone”—is the least threatening to those who want to know about Natives but who have no intention of actually interacting with any, while the most challenging ones by myself, Angela Cavender Wilson, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Karen Swisher, Susan Miller, and Paula Gunn Allen evidently scare readers, so they either ignore them or have nothing nice to say about us.

Further, witness the number of repetitive “Indian history” anthologies published recently (most notably by Routledge and Blackwell) to get an idea for how authors purposely neglect to use, much less cite, the work of Indigenous scholars who challenge the way history and culture has been written, in addition to pushing for more practical and useful studies instead of more-of-the-same about topics we’ve seen repeatedly. Recent reading lists posted from some institutions begs the question of what, exactly, are the missions of these Native studies programs. Do they exist to educate interested students about the realities of Native life and to collaborate to find solutions to myriad troubles faced by Native America, or do these programs exist to create jobs for those literature, history, policy, anthropology, psychology, humanities, and religion professors who “study” Natives but won’t lift a finger to help them?

Apparently, many young scholars are being taught by professors in “Indian Studies” and the rapidly growing field of “Ethnic Studies” who are ignorant about this issue. Those mentors not so ignorant, however, but who are afraid that “the Indians will take over” or who are afraid that they will have to change their research agendas and start creating interesting essays and books, tell their charges that those of us concerned about the direction Native studies is taking are “essentialists” and/or believe that “only Indians can write about Indians.” These tiresome, fabricated attacks are nothing more than rationalizations of their own refusal or lack of ability to do useful work and clearly illustrate their fear of losing control of Native studies.

How can we meet this responsibility? The answer to such a question is a long one, and there is not room here to adequately address the issue. Personally, I try to find out what it is that tribes need and to focus my energies on those things. As one of the few Native full professors in the business, I try to use what little influence I have to accomplish these goals. In my capacity as editor of the *American Indian Quarterly* I have put a halt to submissions about fiction books and writers that we have read about repeatedly (for example, since 1998 I have received twenty-eight essays about *House Made of Dawn*). AIQ now seeks submissions on policy, environmental protection, treaty rights, economic development, oral histories, AIS programs, activism, and decolonization strategies. Submissions dealing with literary criticism must include discussions about the author’s ability to impart messages about nation building, empowerment for Natives, and hope for the future. It is interesting to note that I have received dozens of papers about the former topics, but only one paper in two years that fits the latter.

I now edit a new book series at the University of Nebraska Press, “Contemporary Indigenous Issues” (see “Challenging the Status Quo in Native American Studies,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 17, 2003). The series allows Natives in academia to examine, challenge, and debate controversial issues that affect the lives and representations of Indigenous Americans today. In addition, I will cochair with Angela Cavender Wilson a series of senior seminars at the School of American Research on decolonization, with the first publication produced by our U.S. and Canadian Indigenous allies being *The Decolonization Workbook*.

I am well aware that these activities do not endear me to those supporting the status quo. However, these are not the people I am concerned about.

I will end this brief discussion with an excerpt from my essay “Should ‘American Indian History’ Remain a Field of Study?,” which appears in *Indigenizing the Academy*. This new book focuses in greater depth on the question at hand. (The anthology is the sequel to *Natives and Academics* and is edited by Wilson and me; it is forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press. Authors address related topics such as academic racism, ethnic fraud, gatekeeping, politics, and favoritism.)

Considering that this is a country founded by colonizers whose policies and behaviors disrupted and almost destroyed Indigenous cultures and lives, historians of the Indigenous past have a responsibility to examine critically the effects of their historical narratives on the well-being of Natives and of the influences their stories have on the retention and maintenance of the colonial power structure. Some historians feel so strongly about this ideology that we have shifted from being discipline-specific to interdisciplinary in order to write about a host of issues that concern Natives. Personally, I side with history philosopher Hayden White, who argues that “any science of society should be launched in the service of some conception of social justice, equity, freedom, and progress, that is to say, some idea of what a good society might be.”

And what is wrong with that?

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From: Karl Evans

Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Re: H-AmIndian Discussion Series—Discussion #1

Hello, all.

For about a half century, the general focus of my studies has been in the area of the role of community religious belief and practice in economic development. I feel it is not necessary to present the whole scope of my findings here, except to say that I have lived within, studied, and tried to feed back to some of the lowest cash-income people in the United States of many ethnic origins.

I have looked within Afro-American, Native American, Anglo American, Chinese American—many different communities. I have learned a lot that needs to be passed back to the communities. But I have had a problem with this.

I am not a competitive person by nature. I choose to simply lay out what I have found and let the hearer choose what to do with it. The hearer can ignore, respond, challenge, whatever. I believe that is the only good discussion.

However, the major problem I have had in this area is getting past the high jealousy of would-be spokespersons in the various groups. These seem to demand that only their personal voices be heard and that because I appear to be an outsider, my voice should be stilled. I have even had a few persons who wanted to listen to me face community persecution because of it. So this ethnic academic jealousy is a major issue. It is bad not just for scholars, but for the community. It makes research extremely difficult for those like myself who would like to feed the research back to the community. I, for one, do not know how to counter it. Perhaps out of this discussion will come some insight for me.

I believe this practice arises out of the same roots of the old nonsense of racism. I have become very discouraged with my own inability to even lay the message out there for folks to have access to.

In our day, we see everywhere the evidence for the power of the individual in society. The Internet, easy printing processes, etc. have made it possible. But too often this has been used to blockade the ideas of others.

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From: Christian McMillen

Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Re: H-AmIndian Discussion Series—Discussion #1

I have several responses to this posting [Devon Mihesuah's], all offered in the spirit of discussion and exchange of ideas. This is an excellent topic. (First a quote from the posting and then a response.)

1) "I and others have already said this in numerous publications, but clearly we need to keep repeating ourselves: Degrees, grants, fellowships, awards, and book contracts have been bestowed upon hundreds of scholars who write about Natives, and there is no question that many scholars prosper from their work, while for the most part the subjects of their studies do not."

Response: I have heard this before—but how do we know? What does this exactly mean? Does it mean that scholars need to "give back" to the communities they study? How? Or does it mean, as Professor Mihesuah suggests, that we only engage in projects that are identified as "useful"? Does this mean that only work with a clear, tangible, preordained result be sanctioned?

2) "Poverty, disease, depression, and frustration are common throughout many tribal nations, and urban Natives (including Native academics) also are stereotyped and treated as second-class citizens. Because of these realities, it is fair to ask how many authors of scholarly works about Natives attempt to find solutions to the problems Natives face. If essays are



going to continue to be reprinted in anthologies, then why can we not see more collections of papers devoted to the historical roots of why Natives are in their current situation, in addition to proposed solutions to their concerns?”

Response: Aren't almost all historians, regardless of research interests, engaged, to some degree, in trying to figure out the historical roots of contemporary problems/issues/dilemmas?

3) “Further, witness the number of repetitive ‘Indian history’ anthologies published recently (most notably by Routledge and Blackwell) to get an idea for how authors purposely neglect to use, much less cite, the work of Indigenous scholars who challenge the way history and culture has been written, in addition to pushing for more practical and useful studies instead of more-of-the-same about topics we’ve seen repeatedly.”

Response: This criticism of a pretty diverse lot of essays is vague. Are they all guilty? What exactly have they done wrong? Are there models of the kind of history that should be written? What would a “more practical” study look like? Why are the essays in question impractical—can an essay be impractical? Have we really repeatedly read discussions of such things as Tlingit conceptions of the past (this is in reference to Sergei Kans’s essay in vol. 2 of the Routledge collection)? Or can we really say that gender—a topic people always say they want MORE of—as exemplified by Natalie Zemon Davis’s essay in vol. 1 of the Routledge collection—is a tired topic? Finally, how can we assess the value of these essays?

These few questions bring me to a larger concern. And that is, What are “useful studies?” And who gets to decide? Should tribes’ concerns/needs be the only motivating factor in what historians—and others, of course—choose to study? How will anyone know what will be of concern in the future that will not now be researched if we only base our research agendas on current concerns? Many, many studies of Indian people done in the past—say, Leslie Spier’s work on the Havasupai—were likely thought of at the time—if anyone gave them any thought at all!—as largely useless. But now they are valuable documents—helpful in land claims, water rights litigation, the reconstruction of band identities, etc., etc. Should we not carry on with such “impractical” studies? I, for one, am reluctant to impose any sort of restrictions on the kinds of things scholars can or cannot choose to work on. Is my work on the Hualapai leader Fred Mahone not practical because the Hualapai did not identify his life as worthy of concern before I began? But now that I have discovered that he was largely

responsible for saving their land—which of course some elders knew about—is my work practical and useful?

Anyway, a few thoughts.

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From: Daniel M. Cobb  
Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Discussion #1: Daniel Cobb's response

Question: To what extent do scholars have a responsibility to the Indigenous communities they study, and how can they fulfill this responsibility?

### *Telling Stories*

When considering scholars' responsibilities to Indigenous communities, attention often turns to issues pertaining to etiquette, methodology, and compensation (Mihesuah 1998). This essay addresses the question from a different, though not unrelated, vantage point. Drawn from my dissertation research into the politics of tribal self-determination during the 1960s, it offers some reflections on what has been written about the period, what has not, and why. Despite its limited topical focus, the larger point of this brief think piece is this: Scholars, no matter their discipline or period of specialization, have an ongoing responsibility to Indian individuals and communities to revise old stories and tell others that have gone unrecorded.

The advent of Red Power and the struggle for tribal self-determination profoundly shape the way academics think about the 1960s and 1970s. According to conventional wisdom, the former decade generally signifies little more than a nebulous period that produced a few notable turns on the road to Red Power. Surveys often make reference to the American Indian Chicago Conference and its "Declaration of Indian Purpose," the founding of the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC), fish-ins in the

Pacific Northwest, the National Congress of American Indians' emergency meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the War on Poverty. And yet manifold stories reside within these oft referenced but sparingly examined events. Indeed, most of them remain locked in archival collections or reside only in the memories of the people that made them happen.

With a basic awareness of the more salient moments of the sixties comes a familiarity with the names of the period's most prominent individuals—Sol Tax, Nancy Lurie, Clyde Warrior (Ponca), Mel Thom (Walker River Paiute), Bruce Wilkie (Makah), Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux), Tillie Walker (Mandan), Robert K. Thomas (Cherokee), Hank Adams (Assiniboine), and LaDonna Harris (Comanche) are a few. But even they typically emerge as rather one-dimensional figures. Take, for instance, Clyde Warrior, a founding member of the NWC known foremost as an advocate of Indian nationalism. People familiar with his formal pronouncements know of his proclivity for vitriolic denunciations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, middle-class American culture, and those Indians he variously labeled “slobs,” “jokers,” “redskin white nosers,” “ultra-pseudo-Indians,” and “Uncle Tomahawks.” (Warrior 1964a). But what of the Clyde Warrior described in the following eulogy written in the wake of his tragic death in 1968?

He was a troubled, heartbroken, but determined man, listening for a response from the world which would be equal to the warmth and strength of his own good spirit. . . . The great emotional silence which surrounded him, the cold emotional emptiness which confronted him, hurt his heart and tormented his spirit. At such times, Clyde Warrior became thunder and lightning and tears. The power and urgency of his spirit, the depth of his inner life, the courage of his commitments, caused him to be uncommonly misunderstood. In a sluggish, apathetic, complacent world, Clyde Warrior's passion for candor and justice vexed the sluggish, troubled the apathetic, outraged the complacent. . . . I am not sure that Clyde Warrior believed in God. I am sure that he wanted to believe in his fellow man. . . . He wanted, like few persons I have known, to believe in the integrity of this nation. (Billings 1968)

The final observation—Clyde Warrior's refusal to give up on reforming the very system he called “a horrendous combination of colonialism, segregation, and discrimination”—explains, in large measure, why he did

not die on the barricades of a violent revolution (Warrior 1964b, 2). To be sure, Warrior talked often about the imminence of an Indian rebellion that would make the Watts riot look “like a Sunday School picnic,” and he warned anyone who would listen that youths could be frustrated by the system only so long before they decided to tear it down (Warrior 1966a and Warrior 1966b).

But that would not be his fate. Rather, an untimely death visited Clyde Warrior while he was with his wife Della (Oto-Missouria), who was working with four- and five-year-old children in the Navajo Nation and north central Oklahoma. At that time, he also served as an advisor to the War on Poverty’s Upward Bound program and encouraged it to establish Indian youth-directed summer workshops for Native college students. And the week he passed away, Warrior had been scheduled to talk to Indian high school students at a youth camp in Wilburton, Oklahoma. This is all to say that Clyde Warrior—a troubled, heartbroken, and determined man—could damn the past and rail against the present, but he refused to turn his back on the future. Here is a story that has only begun to be told (Warrior and Smith 1996, 37–44, 52–59). It is one of triumph and self-destructive tragedy. But more than that, it is about a deeply flawed and courageous human being who cared enough to try.

A reconsideration of the sixties further yields less well-known stories about people who used subtle forms of diplomacy and manipulation in order to effect change. As executive director of the National Congress of American Indians between 1964 and 1967, Vine Deloria Jr. exemplified this strategy. So, too, did a litany of important figures such as James J. Wilson (Oglala), Wendell Chino (Mescalero Apache), Roger Jourdain (Anishinaabe), Forrest Gerard (Blackfeet), James Hena (Tesuque Pueblo), and Helen Scheirbeck (Lumbee). Still others engaged in Community Action programs, testified before congressional hearings, or traveled to Washington DC to take part in the Poor People’s Campaign. In regard to the latter, historians sometimes note the presence of people such as Hank Adams, Mel Thom, and Tillie Walker; we know almost nothing about the three elderly women from the Fort Berthold Reservation who endured the criticism of their tribal council in order to participate and to speak before the Senate about hunger and malnutrition in their communities. These people may not fit latter-day observers’ definition of “activists,” but they certainly did act in politically purposeful ways.

At the same time, it can also be said that no matter how broadly one

defines activism, the fixation on it has led to the nearly total neglect of a large group of people—some did not advocate change, others served as stalwart opponents to it, and yet another group had no love for the status quo but did not agree with the strategies activists used to reform it. And finally, social histories of the individuals, families, and communities whose lives went untouched by the political battles over tribal self-determination and whose paths did not cross the road to Red Power remain to be written as well.

My own attempt to rethink the politics of tribal self-determination addresses some of these voids, but it ultimately raises more questions than answers. Indeed, it has left me with a profound appreciation for how fragmentary our understanding of the past is and how much work remains to be done. In order to carry it out, scholars—no matter their expertise—must be willing to reconceptualize the past, transcend timeworn narratives, consider new actors, and revisit the old. By consulting new archival sources and, even more important, talking to the people that made these histories possible, we might also restore some of the “thunder and lightning and tears” that enlivened these utterly human dramas. If scholars can do that, they will be fulfilling at least part of their responsibility to Indigenous peoples and communities. It is daunting to think that academic writing can forge collective memory, that it can effectively make some lives, ideas, and events appear to be momentous and others inconsequential. For this reason, power and responsibility reside in the way we go about telling stories.

Daniel M. Cobb

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From: Jeffrey P. Shepherd

Date: Thursday, 17 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Scholarly Responsibilities

Greetings:

I would like to say that this has already proven to be an excellent discussion about extremely important issues. I also would like to thank the editors at H-AmIndian (I do miss working there) and the discussants for contributing their time and effort to this conversation.

Hopefully I can keep this brief, but the topic is quite important and deserves constant revisiting. In a course about American Indian history at Arizona State University (ASU), we read Devon Mihesuah's collection of essays.

For some people (white students) it was a shock that Native scholars were actually calling their bluff and demanding some reciprocity and ethics in their work. Goodness! Leave the archives and talk with real people? Responsibility?! In some ways the discourse simply repeated in microcosm the disbelief expressed by senior scholars at major conferences where Indigenous histories are presented.

But, in many ways, it diverged—in part because of the environment at ASU. Although there should be twice or quadruple the number, ASU has a considerable number of Native students, faculty, and staff. This created (and still does) an important moral and ethical check on the otherwise culturally unaccountable ivory tower. This reality, plus the guidance of specific faculty with a personal and professional investment in ethics and reciprocity, shaped a significant number of scholars who, I believe, can

potentially change the regrettable course charted by previous generations of scholars.

Today, I use Devon's collection in my graduate reading seminar on "Indigenous Women in Borderlands History," but I also assigned Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodology*, which is a trenchant and far-reaching analysis of research and Native peoples. They should be mandatory reading for ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS.

But more than books and classes, I have several other solutions (most of which are not mine—they are things I have heard and read about over the past eight years):

1. Hire more Native faculty to guide and mentor Native and non-Native doctoral students.

2. Institute ethical standards and codes of conduct for working with Native communities . . . but integrate these things at the departmental and course level. (See any of Dr. Mihesuah's books for guidance on this.)

3. Doctoral advisors need to support, encourage, and even demand that their students visit, meet, live on, and generally get to know the communities they "research on."

4. Change the discourse. Expunge phrases like, "I am doing work on \_\_\_\_ (insert group of people)," "I am doing Navajo History," "My Paiutes" (unless you are Paiute, the fact that you are researching their history does not give you the right to claim possession of them). There are many other phrases that exemplify a particular colonial attitude toward Native people. Instead, how about "I am doing research \*with\* \_\_\_\_ (enter community)."

5. Learn about the history of anthropology and history vis-à-vis Native people—not to emulate it, but to know why Indigenous people are so irate at researchers. As many of you know, there are several centuries of animosity . . . as well as "academic" contributions to cultural genocide and intellectual colonialism, and many PhD students do not have a clue about this.

6. Offer to do work for the community you are writing about. If they want a history of cattle ranching on the reservation, try to do it. If they want to know about treaty or territorial boundary issues, offer to find out about those issues. Think about research as a two-way street.

Academics should not be mining Native peoples for their history and then leaving them high and dry.

7. If community members have an interest, offer a workshop or two about researching in the National Archives, local repositories, or state historical societies. If they have not gone to these places already, plan a trip to the National Archives or a regional branch.

8. Meet with Native students in tribal schools and talk about your research interests, offer to work on curriculum, etc.

9. Construct an archival list of your sources (the boxes, folders, and documents you find). Give the list to the cultural resources department on a reservation.

10a. ASK first before you begin your research about a particular people's history. If they reject you, find another topic . . . or at least ask again and see what you can do to make it more palatable. If they say no, go to plan "B." Which is worse: changing your topic, or doing irreparable harm to a community that wants its history kept to itself?

10b. Remember: the documents that are in the archives . . . particularly those in Record Group 75 of the National Archives, are a result of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) presence on reservations. Those documents are the result of a colonial bureaucracy that administered and governed the lives of Native peoples. There are things in the archives that Native people don't want public. I know this for a fact. So, researchers are using documents that were sometimes generated against the will of Native people. So just because they are "public documents" does not mean they should be, nor does it mean that Native people want them public. Use them with care and caution.

11. Ask the tribal councils and tribal governments what they need research on. What would be useful? If they don't really need another book about their style of warfare or headdresses, try issues of cultural sovereignty, relations with the state, economic development, etc.

12. Try to avoid digging up \*highly sensitive issues\* that would cause undue harm to people. This is a touchy issue, but there are ways to present information that balances the morality of being human with the rigors of the academy. Academics enjoy "academic freedom," but that freedom needs to be critically interrogated and weighed against the useless damage it may do to people.

13. Try to learn the language; remember Angela Cavender Wilson's comment that historians of German history would be laughed out of



the field if they did not speak German. Granted, it might be more difficult to learn Tohono O'odham than Italian, but give it a shot.

14. Give copies of your research to the community so they can judge it.

15. Using the profits from your book, set up a scholarship fund for promising students interested in college.

16. At conferences, thank the people that helped you with your work.

17. Critically investigate your own motivations for research into Native histories. Did you see *Dances with Wolves* one too many times?

18. Ask the question, "What if some strange historian said she/he was doing research on my family?" Would you want them to follow some ethical guidelines? What if they found some dirty laundry? Embarrassing stories? Do you want that published and placed on display in every college library across the country?

19. Have a thick skin. Learn to take criticism. Admit when you are wrong. Be humble. Have a sense of humor.

20. Read Vine Deloria Jr. . . . again.

Well, that is probably much more than anyone asked for. By the way, Christian's work about a massive U.S. Supreme Court case between the Hualapai and the Santa Fe Railway is a wonderful contribution to the history profession, but it is also going to help the Hualapais with land claims issues. Both the chair of the Hualapai tribal council and at least one Hualapai judge have told this to me. They are pleased about the work and have been impressed that a researcher made the trip all the way from New Haven, Connecticut, to Peach Springs, Arizona.

Thank you again for this wonderful discussion. Perhaps there is a conference or conference panel in the midst of this.

Best wishes,

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From: Matthew Makley  
Date: Friday, 18 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Discussion #1: Matthew Makley's response

I would like to thank the staff of H-AmIndian for stimulating discussion of this important question. Thanks especially to Dr. Joyce Kievit, Jay Precht, Laurie Arnold, Brian Collier, and Al Carroll. Thanks are also due to those scholars who have already begun to answer this and other important questions, among whom Dr. Angela Cavender Wilson and Dr. Devon Mihesuah stand out. As always, I thank my mentors for their continual guidance, in particular Dr. Peter Iverson and Dr. Lisa Emmerich.

Balanced, sensitive, and ultimately accurate understandings of American Indian communities cannot exist without the consultation, collaboration, and sanction of those groups being "studied." Scholars have an immeasurable responsibility to the Indigenous communities they "study." Without the community and their explicit permission, a "study" would not be possible. Furthermore, an individual who would, in the spirit of "objectivity," purposefully avoid working with a community could not create an accurate or balanced account.

The word "study" itself carries colonial connotations. Two weeks ago I had the good fortune of attending the Navajo Studies Conference, where Dr. Larry W. Emerson delivered an excellent keynote address on decolonization and Native history. Working from some of the ideas presented by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), Dr. Emerson asserted that the time has come for scholars to move away from Western, positivist research methods, which treat Indian communities like specimens in a laboratory.

Instead of "studying" communities, perhaps scholars engaged in Indigenous research can begin working with tribal members. Students of Indigenous culture cannot deny or ignore the pernicious effects of colonialism on Native communities. Moreover, scholars have the responsibility to acknowledge the tremendous success of tribes who survived and continue to survive in the face of severe and protracted colonization, on both the cultural and physical levels. Scholars have the added responsibility of respecting tribal ways of knowledge. For those working in the field of history, it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge the fact that Native communities know their history far better than a "detached" scholar ever could. Whether

or not they choose to share that history with the Western, Euroamerican world is purely their choice.

In working with the Washo community of California and Nevada, I have examined countless documents generated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These documents tell a partial story; taken alone they represent more the bureaucracy that created them than the community they refer to. In the course of my research I asked, "What is missing?"

I soon realized that Washo history itself was missing. The voices of the elders, tribal historians, tribal leaders, and community members needed representation; how could I relate an accurate history without these voices? When I first began talking about history with Washo tribal chairman Brian Wallace, he patiently helped me to understand that Washo history exists outside the Western, Euroamerican, linear-based framework we become all too familiar with in graduate school. He taught me, and continues to teach me, that for the Washo, history is rooted in place. Washo history can be found in the ancient dialogue developed between the community and their environment; a dialogue that enabled the Washo to live in one place for over 5,000 years.

As a researcher interested in history, my responsibility to the Washo community centers upon cooperation. Through this cooperation a history not strictly confined to the written word emerges. Through the interplay of the bureaucracy-generated documents and the invaluable stories, songs, ceremonies, dances, baskets, and memories of Washo tribal members, a larger picture unfolds. The responsibilities that lead a researcher to a community invariably allow for a richer, more honest, and ultimately more accurate creation.

The researcher's responsibility to the communities they work with can be fulfilled in a number of ways. To begin with, a researcher should contact community members to inquire about the appropriateness of a proposed project, bearing in mind if the community does not sanction the work, it cannot go forward. Secondly, if the community agrees to work with a scholar, continuous contact with group members should be maintained; this process may include sharing findings, asking diverse opinions on issues, and running drafts of a paper, article, book, etc. by tribal members. Lastly, scholars should share their conclusions with community members, perhaps in a public setting, making as many copies of the finished product as possible. A scholar might also offer copies of all documents used in the work along with bound copies of any published works.

The last responsibility I will point to hinges upon the acknowledgement that what we say as professional researchers has implications in the “real” world. When working with Native communities, what is written can have an effect on legal proceedings, a child’s self-image, outside community opinions, and a collective tribal image. For far too long Western scholars, particularly historians, have remained wedded to the written or codified source for “evidence.” The debate about orality vs. literacy has pushed historians in a more promising direction; however, much work remains. By acknowledging our responsibilities to the communities with which we work, a process of healing, intimately intertwined with decolonization, can begin. What will the results be? Only time, or more appropriately place, will tell.

Matthew Makley  
PhD Student  
Arizona State University

From: Andy Fisher  
Date: Friday, 18 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Re: Discussion #1: Essay #1: Scholarly Responsibilities

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I would like to thank H-AmIndian for starting this discussion and applaud the contributors for their frank and thoughtful comments on an important subject. Jeff Shepherd’s and Devon Mihesuah’s contributions, in particular, provide valuable guiding principles and concrete suggestions for ways to make academic scholarship more accountable and more useful to Native communities. However, there are several questions I have encountered in my own research that I would like to pose in response to Jeff’s list:

10a. ASK first before you begin your research about a particular peoples’ history. If they reject you, find another topic . . . or at least ask again and see what you can do to make it more palatable. If they say no, go to plan “B.” Which is worse: changing your topic, or doing irreparable harm to a community that wants its history kept to itself?

This is a crucial point, but what if some members of a tribal community support the work and find it useful but others do not? The assump-

tion that certain individuals, even a tribal government, can speak for the entire “tribe” seems itself redolent of colonialism. Indian communities are and always have been diverse, and their members do not always agree with each other. For example, what if “traditional” Hopis wanted a scholar to investigate the influence of energy companies on tribal politics, but the acting council opposed such research? What if a group of people enrolled in one tribe sought to prove that they should be recognized as a separate group, against the wishes of their current tribal government? The answer you receive when requesting permission would seem to depend in part on whom you asked. In such circumstances, where does the scholar’s responsibility lie?

By the same token, what if your research involves several different tribes/groups that have sometimes been at odds with each other? What if one group sanctions your work but another demands that you stop? Are studies that explore intra- and intertribal divisions helpful or harmful? In many cases, these divisions resulted from colonial policies, yet Native people are sometimes uncomfortable with work that mentions tribal factionalism. How does one avoid getting caught in the middle of such disputes and/or the accusation of “taking sides?”

13. Try to learn the language: remember Angela Cavender Wilson’s comment that historians of German history would be laughed out of the field if they did not speak German. Granted, it might be more difficult to learn Tohono O’odham than Italian, but give it a shot.

Some Native people do not want outsiders, especially non-Indians, to learn their languages. They see it as another form of cultural appropriation (much like “White shamanism”). Here again, permission is the key, but permission from whom? If the tribe’s cultural protection committee says it’s OK but some elders object, what should you do?

15. Using the profits from your book, set up a scholarship fund for promising students interested in college.

Profits from your book? Seriously, that’s a good suggestion, but many of us should be so lucky.

Andy Fisher  
PhD Candidate, Arizona State University  
Instructor, Portland Community College

From: Angela Cavender Wilson

Date: Saturday, 19 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Comments of Discussion #1 from Professor Angela Cavender Wilson

Just a few comments regarding the responsibilities of scholars to Indigenous peoples . . .

I am encouraged and uplifted by the current discussion as it seems to herald the arrival of a new wave of scholars committed to critically reflecting on their own involvement with research and writing about Indigenous peoples. Thanks to Matthew Makley and Jeff Shepherd for your cogent suggestions on how to conduct responsible, cooperative, and useful research! It is wonderful to encounter commentary from young scholars who have already seriously contemplated the relationship between researchers and Indigenous peoples. You have already realized the tremendous rewards that come when engaging in cooperative and relevant work!

Devon Mihesuah is right on target with her commentary. We have had too few Native scholars (or non-Indigenous scholars) courageous enough to consistently take a critical stance against the exploitation of Indigenous peoples in research. Along with the voices of Vine Deloria Jr. and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, hers is one that needs to be heard in the academy over and over again until the colonialist ideas regarding the “studying of Indians” are eradicated.

Christian McMillen in his commentary suggested that “almost all historians” are engaged in “trying to figure out the historical roots of contemporary problems/issues/dilemmas,” but I think if we examine the most recent trend in our field, this is not necessarily the case. Much of the work created as part of the “New Indian History” movement in recent decades has sacrificed a critical look at the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples in favor of an approach that emphasizes “Indian” agency and resiliency. As people in our communities continue to die at exceptionally early ages and continue to face horrendous social conditions, this emphasis on a rose-colored reality does a real disservice to people who are fighting for survival—physically, psychologically, spiritually, and culturally. Without a critical examination of the ongoing colonization process, as well as its roots, it is impossible to address meaningful ways to resist

colonization that would help empower Indigenous communities. When reading much of the work published in this genre, I ultimately feel disempowered, especially if in their glossing over of the issues there is little or no interrogation of the living perpetrators, whether they be individuals or institutions. Frankly, we don't need any more book projects like this.

A few comments also on what is useful . . . every Indigenous community of which I am aware, whether they be reservation, urban, or even academic, is facing major challenges, many of them life threatening. Every community of Indigenous peoples possesses courageous, intelligent, and unrelenting activists who struggle every day on behalf of their people. These people would be able to offer excellent suggestions regarding the kinds of research that need to be conducted, but this, of course, would require developing positive relations with living Indigenous peoples. The breadth and depth of research that needs to be done is daunting in its scope . . . there is no shortage of options for research agendas that will be useful to Indigenous peoples. It continues to blow my mind that non-Indigenous scholars defensively argue about minor points that prevent them from taking the plunge and working with Indigenous peoples in a cooperative and respectful manner. While scholars are quibbling over how many people it would take to approve their research, whether an irrelevant research topic now might be useful in the next century, the obstacles to learning a tribal language, or the difficulty in overcoming the politics of Indigenous research, our people are dying.

I, for one, do think scholars should engage in areas of research dictated by an Indigenous agenda, not their own. If scholars maintain the argument that they should not have Indigenous "restrictions" placed on their work and they are willing to subjugate Indigenous concerns for their own personal agenda, I would consider this intellectual colonialism.

Angela Cavender Wilson  
Arizona State University

From: Jeffrey P. Shepherd  
Date: Saturday, 19 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Re: Discussion #1: Essay #1: Scholarly Responsibilities

Hello list—

In response to the insightful comments from Andy Fisher, sure, it is not as cut-and-dry as simply asking permission. Who do you ask? What authority do they have? There are multiple groups and perspectives on a reservation . . . on many reservations, and a researcher cannot realistically please everyone. This goes as well for any history anyone writes. However, I think that writing American Indian history includes a somewhat unique set of expectations because of the history of the relationships between Natives and academics. At the very minimum, one might want to talk about the proposed project with some representatives or members of a community to see how they feel about it. I think the process is as important as the end result.

I should also explain myself and my work. My comments stem in part from working with the Hualapai Nation on a “community history.” The dissertation delved into their history in considerable detail and involved extensive investigation into the relationships between various groups within the community. However, before I went too far into the project, I presented the proposal to the tribal council.

And sure, one could say that presenting it only to the council reinforces or somehow supports the shaky historical legitimacy of that body. However, taken on a case-by-case basis, in this case, I met with dozens of people on the reservation before I presented it to the council. After attending events and gatherings on the reservation, I discerned a mild to extreme interest in the project. Eventually, the council supported it.

But, *THEY* placed stipulations on me. First, they did not want me to reveal the location of traditional cultural properties (TCPS) and they wanted me to investigate their relationship with the Colorado River. They wanted an investigation because they live along 110 miles of the river, but they cannot legally use an ounce of the water (thus my previous post about *AZ v. CA*). So, had I not met with the official governing body on the reservation, I might not have known about their heightened interest in the legal issues surrounding the river.

Anyway, some people on the reservation disliked the project. So, I talked



with them. I asked them what they did not like. One or two did not like researchers, period. However, they appreciated the willingness to talk with them and hear their grievances. A few others were concerned that I would make lots of money. (I told them I had already spent thousands of dollars of my own money for research, but I was honest and said that the dissertation—as a right of passage for PhDs—will help me get a job. I also told them that any profits from book sales—such as they would be—I had committed to an educational scholarship). Others were concerned I would divulge traditional religious sites and stories. (I would not do that; plus, I work under the guidance of the Tribal Cultural Resources Department, and they checked the writing.) In sum, 95 percent of them eventually said that it was important for the “outside world” (their words) to know more about the Hualapai. After that, most volunteered for an interview!

Regarding multitribal studies . . . obviously it gets more complicated, and I do not have answers to all of these issues. At some point we all have to make decisions and realize that not everyone will agree with them. One side may not agree, but if one is trying to present the history in a “balanced” (that is, not objective) and equitable manner, I think one has done a good job. Doing research does not mean that everyone has to support your conclusions. However, if you provide some evidence, write a story that is multifaceted and respects the perspectives of many people, then you are on the right track. Some people will never be happy, and that is why I said researchers need to have a thicker skin and be able to accept criticism

Ultimately, I think a key issue is that we have a responsibility to make an effort and learn about the feelings, perspectives, and knowledge of the people and the relations of those we research. You will never find total unanimity. However, I think there is an acceptable and morally responsible “happy medium” somewhere, but we will never know what that is if we do not make an effort.

Regarding the language, many of the same points above apply, I think. If a group of Germans tell you not to learn German even if you want to write about Bismarck, what will you do? What right do they have to tell you? Of course, writing about Native histories is different from German history, but I think, again, the larger issue is one of intent. Do people think you intend to co-opt their language, use it against them, etc? Why not ask them why, and explain your intentions?

If there is a Hualapai dictionary and orthography in a library in Phoenix, well, go read it and learn some of the basics. I think (but many people

might disagree) that most folks might respect you if you made the effort to learn their language in an attempt to present a fair story of their history. Plus, perhaps people are again reacting out of their frustration and distrust of academics. Then I think it is the responsibility of the academics to take the heat and build some bridges with Native communities. Walking away simply reinforces the historical inequalities and expectations that many Native communities have about selfish researchers.

Regarding scholarships from book royalties . . . well, I am trying to be optimistic.

Sorry again for the long-winded response.

Best wishes to everyone,

Jeffrey P. Shepherd

Visiting Assistant Professor of Western/Native American History

University of Texas at El Paso

From: Clara Sue Kidwell

Date: Saturday, 19 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Discussion #1: Professor Kidwell's response

### *The Future of Tribal Sovereignty*

The concept of tribal sovereignty is one whose meaning has been constantly renegotiated throughout the history of American Indian/Euro-pean contact. The changes in its meaning reflect shifting power relationships between cultures. The Indian tribes of North America governed themselves in various ways before contact. They determined their own membership. They negotiated treaties with various European colonial powers as sovereign entities, first to establish peaceful relationships, but then, weakened by disease and overwhelmed by the burgeoning non-Indian population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to put themselves under the protection of foreign governments and, ultimately, of the United States, generally in exchange for their lands. Their rights to govern their own internal affairs, however, were acknowledged through treaty language and judicial interpretation. The threat to that power of self-government came primarily through education of Indian children by Christian missionaries, often in boarding school situations where they were

stripped of their language, Native dress, and culture to be refashioned in the white man's image.

As a historian and a teacher, I believe it is my responsibility to Indigenous communities to educate American Indian and non-Indian students about tribal sovereignty and what it means to be a citizen of a sovereign nation. In a state where many tribal members are not readily distinguishable from their non-Indian neighbors, and where the state government has routinely challenged Indians' exemption from state taxation of tribal enterprises, it is incumbent on the state's educational institutions to educate its citizens concerning the unique relationship of tribes to the federal government, a relationship based on treaty rights.

Although most non-Indians in Oklahoma may view treaties as anachronistic, it is our responsibility as historians to provide the context within which they can be viewed as the basis for tribal sovereignty. In shaping the curriculum of the Native American studies program at the University of Oklahoma (an interdisciplinary bachelor's degree program comprised of courses in Native American studies, anthropology, English, history, art, and music), the faculty have worked from several basic premises to give students a comprehensive understanding of contemporary American Indian life and identity.

These premises are the following: American Indian identity comes primarily from a relationship with land. Land is the source not only of subsistence but of spiritual power and, in the form of reservations or tribal trust land, of contemporary political identity. History must be taught from a cross-cultural perspective, emphasizing the differing understandings and cultural values of the actors. The relationship of Indian tribes to the federal government is a unique one based on treaties. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall's decisions in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823), *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1831) explicated that relationship as a fiduciary one on the part of the federal government, and it remains so today. Indian languages are powerful media to transmit cultural values, and it is important to maintain or revitalize them as markers of cultural identity. And finally, the expressive arts (music, dance, literature, fine arts) are examples of both persistence and adaptation in Indian cultures.

The role of the discipline of history is crucial in a Native American studies curriculum because historical context is essential to understanding the status of American Indian tribes as sovereign entities in the United

States today. Historians have a responsibility to educate people to the fact that tribes still exist. In history textbooks Indians are often portrayed as overwhelmed and helpless before the advance of American civilization, and the closing of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier, coinciding as it did with the nadir of the American Indian population (c. 250,000) in the census of 1890, gives the impression that Indian tribes largely disappeared after that time.

Historians as researchers have a responsibility to examine the ways in which the historical experience of Indian tribes has changed concepts of sovereignty over time and to show that tribes have changed and adapted within the framework of their unique relationship to the federal government. Historians must also demonstrate that Indians are remarkably diverse peoples rather than some homogenous "Other." Tribal histories set in the larger context of American society and brought forward into the later twentieth century can contribute to greater scholarly and perhaps public understanding of the special status of American Indians and to the diversity of issues that tribes as self-governing entities must deal with.

The education of Indian students who will be leaders of their communities in the future is critical to the preservation of tribal sovereignty. Students must learn their rights and responsibilities as tribal citizens, and they must be prepared to defend the concept of sovereignty from increasingly hostile state and federal courts. In the past decade the United States Supreme Court, which before then had upheld the rights of tribes to internal self-government, has begun to rule more often in favor of state and federal rights to interfere in tribal affairs. These legal battles, often grounded in historical interpretations, will affect the future status of tribes.

There is a growing backlash against the concept of tribal sovereignty in contemporary society as the stereotype of the casino-rich Indian joins other stereotypes. There is also a basic conundrum in federal policy, which seeks to promote economic self-sufficiency for Indian tribes, but when they begin to achieve it, leads to cutbacks in funding and services that are part of the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government with respect to tribes. Congress, in writing the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988, also imposed a requirement that tribes conform to state laws with regard to the kinds of gaming they could offer and form compacts with states—a major break from the precedent that tribes relate only to the federal and not to state governments.

Although the vagaries of federal policy are part of history, they have had

profound effects on the cultures of American Indian tribes, which have shown remarkable resilience in their abilities to survive. Historians have a responsibility to document that survival so that it will continue in the future.

Clara Sue Kidwell  
University of Oklahoma

From: Andrew Fisher  
Date: Sunday, 20 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Re: Discussion #1: Essay #1: Scholarly Responsibilities

This will probably sound “defensive” coming from a non-Indian academic, but I don’t see it as “quibbling” to ask sincere questions about the complications that may arise in requesting permission to conduct research with Native communities. Mine were posed not in the spirit of making excuses for refusing to seek permission but rather because I have encountered precisely these dilemmas in the process of seeking permission. They are not rhetorical or hypothetical questions, and dismissing them as mere dodges is a disservice to those of us who are wrestling with this issue in real (not rose-colored) terms.

Perhaps I should include specific examples from my own work to illustrate what I mean. I chose not to do so earlier because I didn’t think the point of the discussion was to showcase individual scholarship, but now I think it is necessary to avoid the charge of abstract excuse making. My recently completed dissertation explores the history of a non-federally recognized, largely off-reservation group known as the Columbia River Indians. Most members of this community are enrolled in recognized tribes such as the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. However, they see themselves as a distinct group and have at times clashed with the confederated tribes over such issues as treaty fishing rights and tribal representation. In writing this history, I have worked with a leader of the Columbia River Indians who is eager to see the history of his people written independently of the tribes they are generally subsumed under, although he has also served on the tribal council of the Yakama Nation. He advised me at one point not to share my research with others because they “wouldn’t like it,” but I have also given copies of my work to various people

affiliated with the Yakama and Warm Springs Tribes. No one has raised any objections at this point, but some of the issues I discuss in my dissertation are politically sensitive.

For example, during the 1960s and 1970s Columbia River Indian fishermen such as David Sohappay challenged the right of both state and tribal governments to regulate their fishing. Their legal activities led to important victories for tribal sovereignty, since they were enrolled members, but also caused intense friction when they continued to ignore tribal regulations. In writing about this issue, I am careful to point out that the whole problem resulted from three actions of the colonizing power: (1) the destruction of the fisheries and the salmon runs due to overfishing, dam projects, etc.; (2) the federal government's simplistic construction of "tribes" and problematic restructuring of familial fishing rights as tribal rights, which put traditional fishers at odds with tribal governments anxious to exercise their sovereignty; (3) the refusal of state governments to respect that sovereignty and the cultural/spiritual needs of Indian fishers. Even with these crucial caveats, some Native people will object to the fact that I discuss political differences within and among tribes, differences that resulted largely from colonial policies but sometimes place tribal governments in an unflattering light. Columbia River Indians generally respond well to the vindication of their perspective on this struggle, and of their history in general, but tribal councils have less cause for enthusiasm.

Where, then, does my responsibility lie in this situation? If one of the tribal councils objects to my research because it acknowledges the existence of a faction or discusses uncomfortable incidents, should I abandon the topic and disappoint the people who have supported it from the beginning? Do the tribes get to say, in effect, that Columbia River Indians do not exist because their existence raises complicated questions about tribal identity? I ask these questions not because I want to duck the issue of accountability but because they have troubled me throughout this project. I (and others, I suspect) would appreciate a discussion of such questions that does not paint them as simple old-guard obstructionism.

Andrew Fisher

From: David Lewis

Date: Tuesday, 22 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Re: Comments of Discussion #1: Scholarly Responsibilities

*Comment to Scholarly Responsibilities to Indigenous Communities*

(This essay is meant to be an overview and assumes a certain amount of previous study and knowledge by the reader of the issues in question. For any clarification of any issue, please query the author, coyotez@oregon.uoregon.edu.)

I would like to thank Professor Devon Mihesuah for beginning this discussion with another incredible essay. This topic and the associated essay appearing in the current issue of *American Indian Quarterly* have me convinced that Professor Mihesuah is leading the charge in decolonizing American research on Indigenous communities. As my own studies have progressed, somewhat organically, I have found common spirits with Vine Deloria, Gerald Vizenor, Bea Medicine, Linda T. Smith, Angela Cavender Wilson, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, an African author of the books *Decolonizing Methodologies* and *Moving the Centre*. I believe that all of the aforementioned Native writers, along with many others, are guiding the next generation of Native American scholarship and the decolonization of research upon Native communities.

I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and hold hereditary ties with the Santiam Kalapuya, Chinook, and Takelma peoples of Oregon. I grew up in an acculturated context, an urban Indian at a time when there was no federally recognized tribe to belong to. Since 1983, and restoration of the Grand Ronde Tribes, the community has been developing the tribe for long-term survival and reconnecting with the fragmented and far-flung community. Termination did nothing to help our people.

My research at the University of Oregon (uo) has involved making connections with the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, and California. Because I have had the privilege of these experiences, I have sought to broaden my perspective of the worldwide decolonization movements among these and other Indigenous peoples. My master's work was with the Tolowa of Smith River Rancheria in northern California. I drafted a National Register of Historic Places application form for their fish camp traditional cultural properties along the coast.

However, the most significant studies I have done are in the area of local histories among my tribal associations. Growing up in Oregon, I attended public schools, and there I was never exposed to any education on the history of the Indian peoples of this place. Nonexistence, invisibility, a black hole, nothingness was the situation of the Indian peoples of Oregon. The only Indians approved for us to learn about were those who had contributed to the American conquest of our world, or so the folklore had led us to believe this.

When I entered college at UO I undertook my own studies of the Indians of Oregon as there were, and are, no studies devoted to this subject. But I found commonality with some graduate students in anthropology who were Indian. I was drawn into a research project in 1997 headed by the Coquille Indian Tribe, called the Southwest Oregon Research Project (see the SWORP Web page, <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/%7Ecoyotez/index.html>).

As part of this project a team of researchers went to Washington DC, and searched through the National Anthropological Archives and National Archives and copied all documents related to the ethnohistory of western Oregon. In all, from the two projects in 1995 and 1998, we recovered 110,000 pages of information. In 1999 I began creating an inventory of the collection, and in two potlatches, 1997 and 2001, the collection was copied and gifted to eighteen tribes in the greater Oregon area. Since 1998 I have worked with the collection and found that there is information there that will rewrite Oregon history. We are using the SWORP umbrella to initiate more information recovery projects and to write curriculum for the public school systems in our area. I have also begun publishing bits and pieces of the collection in tribal newspapers, tribal conference proceedings, and journals (*Changing Landscapes*, Coquille Indian Tribe).

The research experience I have gained has led to research and publication on a theory of the origin of the word "Oregon." My coauthor Scott Byram and I devised a complex theory using Indian historic accounts of the word "ooligan," in association with other scholarly work in ethnohistory, nutrition studies, history, and anthropology, to prove that the word Oregon is of Indigenous origin. "Ourigan, Wealth of the Northwest Coast" was published in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* in summer 2001. Since publication the theory has become part of a polemic discussion about issues of the validity of long-distance Indigenous travel and trade, the beginning of Indian trade languages, European versus Indigenous ori-



gins of place names, the validity and quality of previous historic research, and the effects of writing “national” histories.

So, how has my work been responsible to Indigenous communities? Perhaps one of the most important effects that colonization had on Indigenous communities is the erasure of history. Not only of the extant tribal histories but of the way history was passed on and recorded, the cultural phenomena associated with tribal history, the invisibility of tribal people in colonial history, and the current black hole seen in contemporary national histories of the United States and Canada and local histories like those of Oregon and British Columbia. In academic institutions Indians are still removed from the public history and relegated to ethnic studies, anthropology, folklore, and linguistics. Similarly, Native peoples are depicted in museums, like the Smithsonian, along with natural history and wildlife and taught in such a manner in biological anthropology classes.

My responsibility has been the reinsertion of Native people and history into public knowledge. We deserve the respect of being a part of the public history. And, when that history is written, Indian perspectives need to be included as part of it. No longer should mythic tales of romanticized warriors or maidens be taught as Indian history. What we found from *SWORP* is that evidence of our histories exists in archives that have not been consulted for over one hundred years and that these accounts, in association with elders’ knowledge, can create an accurate account of Indian history. In addition, there are Indian writings and perspectives within the correspondence and anthropological ethnographies of the collection. Learning to read these documents, and understand the bias, the prevailing theories, and how accurate they may be, can help us understand how colonization and acculturation work within anthropology, linguistics, and historic studies. We have found that the primary documents secreted away in far away archives contain much more information than what has been included in secondary and tertiary scholarly studies.

Through the “outing” of this long ignored (by the academy) area of Indian history, decolonization of anthropological and historic research on Indian communities has begun through the efforts of the aforementioned Native scholars and a host of others. We are now in a situation where it is the task of the non-Native scholars to catch up with the Native scholars.

There is nothing wrong with the area of Native history as it fills in the black holes of the public history. Without the reluctant involvement of

Native peoples, the United States and Canada, as well as other imperial powers of the world, would not have imperialized, colonized, or acculturated anyone. Restoring Native perspectives on history restores at least half of the collective history and affects the social, economic, and political position of Native communities in society.

David G. Lewis  
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde  
University of Oregon, Anthropology

From: Melinda Marie Jetté  
Date: Friday, 25 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Re: Comments of Discussion #1: Scholarly Responsibilities

I have read the ongoing discussion with great interest, for the issues raised are those graduate students have been struggling with in British Columbia (as has the province itself as it moves through a nettlesome modern treaty-making process). I was especially enthused by contributions from David Lewis and Andy Fisher on the American Pacific Northwest.

Both have highlighted this “particular” regional context where so much work remains to be done with regard to both Indian communities and educating the wider citizenry on Native history. As a native-born Oregonian now back home in Portland, I am struck by the great forces of erasure and marginalization in the region, as reflected in Andy Fisher’s comments on nonreservation Columbia River Indians, David Lewis’s comments on Grand Ronde, and my own work on French Prairie, OR (a historic, interethnic, post-fur trade French-Indian community established in the traditional territory of the Ahantchuyuk Kalapuyans, just north of the Santiam Kalapuyans).

For example, the Willamette Valley, the Oregon “Eden” that attracted the Oregon Trail emigrants, was for thousands of years the home of the various Kalapuyan groups. When American historians and teachers tell the “story of Oregon,” do they talk about the thousands of years of large-scale landscape management by the Kalapuyans to “create” this so-called Eden?

I worked for a number of years as a tour guide at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver BC, which receives roughly a quarter of a million

visitors a year. The museum itself is both supported and criticized by various aboriginal groups, and it continues to play a role in educating so many Canadians, Americans, and international visitors on Northwest Coast Native culture and history. Now working as a researcher for the Oregon Historical Society—on a Teaching American History Grant program sponsored by the federal government—I am struck by the continuing ignorance of the wider citizenry, especially children, with regard to regional Indian history. The schoolchildren we encountered in British Columbia were in general better educated and sensitized to aboriginal history than I find is the case in Oregon.

That said, I would like to offer a few comments from an annotated bibliography on the Canadian context prepared some years ago by myself and two colleagues at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Questions of ethics, methodology, historiography, etc. were central to the discussion we hoped to foster.

Comments from Keith Thor Carlson, Melinda Marie Jetté, and Kenichi Matsui, "An Annotated Bibliography of Major Writing in Aboriginal History, 1990–99," *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (March 2001): 123–72.

As the Marshall decision [regarding the aboriginal fishery in the Maritimes] reveals, many Canadians do not support the idea of Aboriginal rights, while many others do not understand the meaning of the term. Outside the realm of Native rights, courtroom dramas over allegations of residents' school abuse make clear to all the financial and moral costs of ignoring past state-sanctioned injustices against both Aboriginal groups and individuals. As Native leaders have long argued (and as many historians would be pleased to hear), diffusing the cross-cultural tensions requires dialogue and mediation, built on a solid base of carefully contextualized historical knowledge.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples makes a strong case for historical study and education as essential components in the process of social change and reconciliation. [footnote]

. . . While the woefully ill-conceived interpretations of indigenous history emerging from court decisions such as Chief Justice McEachern's 1991 Delgamuukw ruling served to invigorate the discipline by motivating strong but reasoned academic responses, they have also led a vocal segment of non-Native society to accuse historians of professional bias and self-censorship. Scholars who con-

ducted research on behalf of Aboriginal organizations involved in disputes with the government are especially susceptible to accusations of partisan study, regardless of the strength of their arguments in relations to their evidence.

Notes on the authors: Keith Thor Carlson was for many years the head of the history research department for the Sto:lo Nation (Coast Salish), and he is now a history professor at the University of Saskatchewan. His recently completed doctoral work focused on the evolving expression of Coast Salish identity.

Kenichi Matsui, a Japanese national who received his university training in Japan, Australia, and the United States, is completing his PhD at UBC. His doctoral thesis explores issues of aboriginal water rights in the trans-boundary regions of BC, Alberta, and Montana.

Melinda Marie Jetté, an American who has studied in France, the United States, Quebec, and BC, is studying the intercultural history of her ancestral French-Indian community in Oregon on the eve of American colonization.

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From: Dana Magliari  
Date: Friday, 25 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Re: Discussion #1

In restricting oneself to studies that meet with the approval of, or receive the sanction of, the community being studied, doesn't the issue of conflict of interest arise? The graduate student researcher risks becoming an unpaid consultant for said community, while having the focus of his/her research deflected off in a direction that doesn't meet the requirements of the academic discipline.

As for the question of usefulness in research, I feel that academic disciplines themselves need to do a better job of taking this into account when establishing academic requirements in the first place. Throughout this discussion thread, I have sensed too much of an onus being placed on the

graduate student to meet standards that his/her predecessors (that is, advisors) never had to meet and might not know how to meet were they back in the field today.

Dana Magliari, Sacramento, California

From: David Lewis

Date: Saturday, 26 April 2003

To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)

Subject: Re: Discussion #1

Hi Dana,

Yes, this is at issue. We Native graduate students are placed in situations where we must “push the envelope” when there are no such like-minded professors at our institutions. And in doing so I tend to do a lot of work that is unpaid and gratis for the community, both Native and academic . . . ! Work for the Native community I do not begrudge, but we are working at ways to introduce new traditions here.

We have supporters here, and I have been fortunate to have gotten credit for some of my work. I am the director of *SWORP* and have had a graduate student fellowship for the past three years, and I have used the collection to create a unique skill for my PhD program. The skill is Chinook Jargon Research, which paves the way for more alternative education in the anthropology department. But we still have few minorities as faculty, and the two just hired (Native American and Japanese from Hawaii) have raised our percentage 100 percent.

I tried introducing a certificate for archaeological site monitoring last year but was met with questions like, “Do the tribes really need and want this?” This is the sort of thing that the tribes would have to organize around to make happen, as the faculty still do not see why relevant courses, for Native people, are so important. Hence the need for more tribal colleges . . .

David Lewis

From: Devon A. Mihesuah  
Date: Sunday, 27 April 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Re: Discussion #1

In regard to the first comment, it seems to me that a degree, a job, promotion, tenure, book contracts, and subsequent royalties, plus retirement funds, grants, fellowships, and awards, not to mention the reputation as a “scholar who studies Indians” is payment (the latter is more impressive to those outside of academia than those in the business and appears to have much social value). And, if your research actually benefits the community you’re working with, but doesn’t meet the requirements/standards of the university, then you’re at the wrong school and working with the wrong people.

This second comment is very disturbing and, unfortunately, a common, weak excuse used by many graduate students today. If the graduate student’s advisor has never heard of institutional research guidelines and has never read anything by Indigenous scholars that focuses on research protocol and sensitivity in finding data and textualizing the results, and has no concern at all about how Native people feel being the subjects of so much research—and receiving so little benefit from that research (all of this ignorance would, by the way, make that professor quite unqualified to mentor graduate students)—then said professor’s lack of knowledge (but, more likely, their privileged position allows them to ignore what those Indigenous scholars have said) excuses the poor put-upon graduate student from doing what is right? Because your professor did not listen to Indigenous concerns means you don’t have to? How convenient! What a relief!

Why do you suppose those old foggy professors of way-back-when did not have to meet ethical standards? And why do you think that some professors in their twenties refuse to meet them now? This is not a matter of age. Who do you suppose has been and still is in control of Native studies? Who creates those standards, and who are the gatekeepers who enforce those standards (hint: think about why these discussions are new to many graduate students)? Why do scholars who study Indians (such as many of those aforementioned retired professors, many of whom I know) continue to find a way around the arguments I and others have posted not

only here but in many publications through the decades? Answer these questions and there will be no need for further rhetorical ones.

Devon A. Mihesuah  
Professor of Applied Indigenous Studies  
Editor, *American Indian Quarterly*

From: Jon Parmenter  
Date: Thursday, 1 May 2003  
To: H-AmIndian (Joyce Ann Kievit, List Editor)  
Subject: Discussion #1: Scholarly Responsibilities to Indigenous Communities

Dear Colleagues:

I have followed this thread with great interest since it first appeared two weeks ago. As a non-Native scholar of Native American history, I am deeply grateful to have the opportunity to hear the perspective of Indigenous academics on this matter and to engage the question of academic responsibility to Indigenous peoples. Many of the responses thus far in the discussion have concentrated on the issue of research ethics, that is, how do we escape the exploitative nature of the “Native-as-informant, scholar-as-interpreter” paradigm that has been so dominant in twentieth-century anthropological and historical research? While this is an essential conversation that needs to continue, I would like to invite consideration of another, often overlooked means by which we in the academic community might begin to make positive contributions of the kind called for by professors Mihesuah, Kidwell, et al.

Specifically, I am talking about a renewed commitment to a long-standing tradition in American higher education: community-based learning (CBL). I write having just completed a semester-long CBL course entitled “Akwasasne: A Community Study,” which aspired to many of the goals elucidated by other contributors to this thread. Full credit for getting the course off the ground goes to a cohort of Mohawk women from the Akwasasne community who agreed several years ago to meet with me to discuss the potential ways in which more mutually beneficial links might be constructed between their community and St. Lawrence University (a small, teaching-oriented liberal arts college located about fifty miles from

Akwesasne Mohawk Territory). I emerged from this initial meeting with several pages of ambitious suggestions, all of which were grounded on the principle of reciprocity. With this governing idea in mind, we started on a relatively small scale by placing students in volunteer service internships (for which they received academic credit) in several community agencies and worked our way toward the aforementioned class.

Applying the principle of reciprocity to a CBL course in Native American history required considerable institutional backing and a substantial investment of time on my part. I was fortunate to have the support of a very forward-thinking CBL Program on my campus, which hosted several useful workshops and provided an introduction to some of the academic literature on CBL (course models, ethical issues, etc.). Even more significant, however, was the ongoing willingness of members of the Akwesasne community to assist me in the planning and composition of the course proposal that we submitted to my institution's administration. We drew up a memorandum of agreement for the class to embed the principle of reciprocity into the course structure and to delineate the respective expectations and commitments of all interested parties.

The class was offered in three-hour sessions on Monday evenings on-site in the Akwesasne Mohawk Territory. We met at the Iohahi:io Adult Education Center, an excellent new facility in the portion of the community bordering the Canadian province of Quebec. This location was chosen on purpose. Since Akwesasne straddles the international boundary, we were consciously attempting to ensure that, even though the course was affiliated with an American school, those in the "Canadian" portion of the territory would have equal access to the class. We negotiated a cash transfer from my institution to the Iohahi:io Center to assist in defraying the not inconsiderable expenses of heating and lighting the building after regular hours in the midst of an extremely cold winter. The class enrolled eight students from St. Lawrence University (one of whom happened to be of Native ancestry; the other seven were non-Natives). We drove up to the class each week in a university van.

Each of these students had demonstrated seriousness of purpose in at least one of my other courses on Native history, and each also passed through a preliminary interview process I conducted to ensure that they were prepared to meet the expectations of the course. In addition to the regular academic work of the class, each student was required to commit to spending a minimum of four hours per week, over the course of a



fourteen-week semester, in an internship at one of several community agencies (these included the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's Environment Division, the Akwesasne Boys' and Girls' Club, the Center for Nation Building and Governance, the Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center, the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment, and the Aboriginal Rights and Research Office of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne). In this way, I hoped that we, as representatives of an outside institution, would be giving something tangible back to the community in exchange for the wonderful learning opportunity afforded to us.

Eligible individuals from the Akwesasne community (that is, those who had completed high school or GED) were offered the opportunity to take the course for full academic credit with no out-of-pocket tuition expenses. Building on a precedent established by our Education Department with several graduate courses they offered occasionally in the community, I managed to convince an ascending series of administrators to extend these financial arrangements to our undergraduate course. Ultimately, we crafted an agreement in which the university pledged to accept a block payment of \$400 USD from one of the two Higher Education offices in the community (one affiliated with the Canadian side, and one on the American side) for each community resident who wished to enroll in the course for academic credit. The balance of the tuition costs for the course, which exceeded \$2,000 USD, was waived by the university, and thus Akwesasne community members could take the course for either undergraduate history credit, or graduate education credit, without direct payment of tuition. Four students from Akwesasne elected to take the course for credit; two for graduate credit, and two for undergraduate credit. A far larger cohort of community residents (ranging from fifteen to twenty-five on any given evening) chose to audit the class rather than take it for credit. Nevertheless, they attended consistently and participated actively in course discussions.

The course adopted a topical approach, analyzing a number of complex issues in the history of the Akwesasne community. We began by examining the different ways in which the community has been represented in Native and non-Native historical writing and proceeded in rough chronological fashion to examine a variety of subjects, including treaties affecting the community, its role in the Iroquois Confederacy, border-crossing rights, iron working, imposed governance structures, the environmental impact of the St. Lawrence Seaway, economic development initiatives, community-based historic preservation initiatives, high-steel construc-

tion work, smuggling, and recent internal debates within the community concerning concepts of sovereignty and nationhood. I prepared a quite lengthy list of readings, and as the weeks passed members of the class provided critical commentary and provided other materials to be added to the list. Copies of the readings were made in advance for each student in the class (whether enrolled or auditing) and the costs were split equally between my institution and one of the community agencies hosting one of our student interns. An additional copy of the entire set of readings was deposited in the community library.

I endeavored from the outset to foster a participatory classroom dynamic. I delivered only one lecture over the course of the semester. The rest of the classes involved either collective or small-group discussion of the readings, which I facilitated by providing study questions in advance of each class meeting, or guest lectures from community members (who, of course, represent the true experts on their history). It is difficult to describe the extent to which all of us in the classroom benefited from the opportunity to hear directly from community residents on matters that pertain to their history and to discuss what (if any) ways in which non-Natives might be able to work constructively toward resolution of some of these issues. In this venue, all of us were able to talk to the primary litigant in a border-crossing rights case that went all the way to the Canadian Supreme Court, to learn from a respected elder about the deep roots of the contemporary historic preservation initiatives underway in the community, to hear firsthand accounts of the devastating ecological impact of the St. Lawrence Seaway on the community, and of what the frequent absence of men employed in the iron working industry has meant to the women of the community. I should also add that the class often forced the St. Lawrence students out of their comfort zones, as many of them were experiencing sustained intellectual engagement with Native people for the first time in their lives. They were challenged to confront their own history and to think about what it meant when community members referred to the dominant North American culture as “the oppressor” and spoke passionately about the impact of colonization on their daily lives. To the credit of everybody in the class, these discussions were framed in a matrix of mutual personal respect that established itself very quickly and remained until the end of the class.

Now that the class meetings have ended, I am waiting for the students’ final reports from their internships and the class evaluation forms to get a

better sense of what worked and what needs more work. But I do hope that this preliminary narrative summary of the structure and function of the class can initiate conversation in this forum (or elsewhere) about the role that CBL can play in helping to initiate positive change in relations between Indigenous peoples and institutions of higher learning. There are tremendous benefits for each group, if partnerships based on reciprocity and respect can be built.

Comments or queries on any aspect of what appears above are most welcome, on- or off-list.

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