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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	92046185
Party	Plaintiff Amanda Blackhorse, Marcus Briggs, Phillip Gover, Shquanebin Lone-Bentley, Jillian Pappan, and Courtney Tsotigh
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Attachments	Part 31 of 60 BLA-TTAB-02016 - 2122.pdf (109 pages)(8939997 bytes)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In re Registration No. 1,606,810 (REDSKINETTES)
Registered July 17, 1990,

Registration No. 1,085,092 (REDSKINS)
Registered February 7, 1978,

Registration No. 987,127 (THE REDSKINS & DESIGN)
Registered June 25, 1974,

Registration No. 986,668 (WASHINGTON REDSKINS & DESIGN)
Registered June 18, 1974,

Registration No. 978,824 (WASHINGTON REDSKINS)
Registered February 12, 1974,

and Registration No. 836,122 (THE REDSKINS—STYLIZED LETTERS)
Registered September 26, 1967

Amanda Blackhorse, Marcus Briggs, Phillip Gover, Jillian Papan, and Courtney Tsotigh,	)	
Petitioners,	)	
v.	)	Cancellation No. 92/046,185
Pro-Football, Inc.,	)	
Registrant.	)	

ATTACHMENT TO PETITIONERS' FIRST NOTICE OF RELIANCE

PART 31 OF 60

BLA-TTAB-02016 – BLA-TTAB-02122

Respectfully Submitted,

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BLA-TTAB-02016

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

"The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian"
History and Meaning of a Proverbial Stereotype

There exist numerous stereotypes and slurs against Native Americans, but the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" is a particularly hateful invective. It has been in use in the United States since the 1860s, and General Philip Sheridan has repeatedly been named as its originator. The proverb's history, dissemination, meaning, and variation are traced to the present day, showing that it is used with surprising frequency in American literature and the mass media as well as in oral speech.

THE INTEREST IN THE STUDY OF NATIONAL CHARACTER, stereotypes, ethnic slurs, and racial prejudice as expressed in proverbs and proverbial expressions has a considerable scholarly tradition. Paremiologically oriented folklorists and cultural historians have assembled collections of such invectives, the three standard books being Otto von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld's *Internationale Titulaturen* (1992 [1863]), Henri Gaidoz and Paul Sébillot's *Blasons populaires de la France* (1884), and Abraham A. Roback's *A Dictionary of International Slurs* (1979 [1944]). Numerous scholarly articles have also investigated the stereotypical worldview expressed in proverbial speech, notably William Hugh Jansen's "A Culture's Stereotypes and Their Expression in Folk Clichés" (1957), Américo Paredes's "Proverbs and Ethnic Stereotyping" (1970), Mariana Birnbaum's "On the Language of Prejudice" (1971), Alan Dundes's "Slurs International: Folk Comparisons of Ethnicity and National Character" (1975), Uta Quasthoff's "The Uses of Stereotype in Everyday Argument" (1978), and my "Proverbs in Nazi Germany: The Promulgation of Anti-Semitism and Stereotypes Through Folklore" (Mieder 1982). This selected list of publications alone is a clear indication that considerable attention has been paid to proverbial invectives against minorities throughout the world. These unfortunate and misguided expressions of hate and prejudice, as well as other unfounded generalizations, are unfortunately part of verbal communication among people, and stereotypical phrases can be traced to the earliest written records. Proverbial stereotypes are regretfully nothing new, but perhaps people are

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more willing today to question such dangerous slurs as they have become more aware of their psychological and ethical implications. This at least is what a more enlightened citizenry should be hoping for at a time when tensions between political, racial, and ethnic minorities appear to be increasing.

Although much is known about proverbial stereotypes among different nationalities and regions, and although numerous studies have been undertaken to examine verbal slurs against Jews and African-Americans, especially in the United States (Bettelheim and Janowitz 1964; Duijker and Fridja 1960; Gilman 1986; Simpson and Yinger 1965), there has been a definite dearth of interest in the proverbial invectives that have been hurled against Native Americans ever since Christopher Columbus and later explorers, settlers, and immigrants set foot on the American continent. As people look back at the colonization of the Americas by Europeans in the year when the world commemorates the quincentenary of Columbus's discovery of America, it is becoming ever more obvious that the native population suffered terribly in the name of expansion and progress. Native Americans were deprived of their homelands, killed mercilessly, or placed on reservations where many continue their marginalized existence today. Early concepts of the "good Indian" or "noble savage" quickly were replaced by attitudes and policies that reduced the native inhabitants to "wild savages" who were standing in the way of expansionism in the name of "manifest destiny" (Arthur 1985; Weinberg 1935). Little wonder that Roy Pearce, in his valuable book with the telling title, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (1967), can quote a thrasonical toast recorded in the journal of Major James Norris in 1779 that expressed the early frontier motto: "Civilization or death to all American savages."[1] That means, bluntly put, change your ways and assimilate the rules and life-style of the white conquerors and settlers or die. Policymakers turned this popular white attitude toward the demonization of Native Americans to justify killing thousands of them or driving the survivors onto inhuman reservations. The unpublished and little-known dissertation by Priscilla Shames, *The Long Hope: A Study of American Indian Stereotypes in American Popular Fiction* (1969), shows how this cruel treatment of the native population is described in literature, and Dee Brown's best-selling book, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (1990[1970]), gives a more factual account. Brown's book contains a telling chapter with the gruesome proverbial title "The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian"; the word "dead" meaning both a literal death and, for those who survived the mass killings, a figurative death, that is, a restricted life on the reservation with little freedom to continue the traditional life-style.

It is alarming that this invective against Native Americans is still in use today, astonishingly enough both by the general population and by Native Americans themselves. Witness, for example, *The Only Good Indian: Essays by Canadian Indians* (Waubageshig 1970), a collection of short prose and poetic texts in which native inhabitants from Canada express their frustration with

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their marginalized life in modern society. How bad must their plight be if the editor, Waubageshig, decided to choose this invective against his own people as a title. The explanation he gives in the introduction is as follows:

> Police brutality, incompetent bureaucrats, legal incongruities, destructive education systems, racial discrimination, ignorant politicians who are abetted by a country largely ignorant of its native population, are conditions which Indians face daily. Yes, the only good Indian is still a dead one. Not dead physically, but dead spiritually, mentally, economically and socially. [Waubageshig 1970:vi]

Yes, this is Canada, but the same picture emerges for the United States, especially in the stereotypical view of Native Americans in motion pictures, as Ralph Friar and Natasha Friar's study entitled *The Only Good Indian . . . The Hollywood Gospel* (1972) illustrates. Even though some movies have portrayed Indians in a favorable light, most are guilty of "the enhancement and perpetuation of stereotype motifs of the Indian as drunken, savage, or treacherous, unreliable or childlike" (Friar and Friar 1972:264). Similar prejudices can, of course, be observed in other forms of mass media and in everyday verbal communication in jokes, songs, and proverbial slurs.

There is yet a third publication that carries part of the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" in its title: a scholarly dissertation by the folklorist Rayna Green. Green, a Native American, chose the title "The Only Good Indian: The Image of the Indian in American Vernacular Culture" (1973) for her voluminous and enlightening study. The proverbial title sets the tone—here is a meticulous account of the "popular" view of Native Americans as expressed by Americans of all age groups, all social classes, and from all regions of the country. The result is a shocking stereotypical image that permeates all modes of expression, of which linguistic examples are only a small part. Green includes a few pages on "Sayings, Proverbs, Proverbial Comparisons, and Other Metaphoric Usages" that comment in a stereotypical way about Native Americans (1973:56–65).

Other lexicographers and paremiographers have also put together small lists of invectives against Native Americans. What follows is a selective number of frequently found proverbial expressions from these different sources, with dates of earliest occurrence where they are available: "to go Indian file" (1754, to walk in a single line), "to be an Indian giver (gift)" (1764), "to sing Indian" (1829, to act as one who defies death), "to do (play) the sober Indian" (1832, to remain sober or drink only very little to get the knives), "to play Indian" (1840, to not show any emotions), "to see Indians" (1850, to be in a delirium), "to turn Indian" (1862, to revert to a state of nature), "to be a regular Indian" (1925, to be a habitual drunkard), and "to be on the Indian list" (1925, to be prohibited from purchasing liquor). Many proverbial comparisons repeat this negative image of Native Americans as morally, physically, and socially inferior to whites: "As dirty as an Indian" (1803), "As mean as an Indian" (1843), "To yell and holler like Indians" (1844), "As wild (untamable) as an Indian"

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(1855). "As superstitious as an Indian" (1858), and "To run like a wild Indian" (1860). Other texts from the late 19th century include "To spend money like a drunken Indian," "To stare (stand) like a wooden Indian," "Straight as an Indian's hair," "Red as an Indian," and "Sly as an Indian" (see Adams 1968:159–161; Cray 1990:114–115; Ewart 1983:77; Mathews 1951:866–876; Morris and Morris 1962:189–190; Partridge 1977:88; Rodnick 1979:181; Rogers 1985:141; Stevenson 1948:1236; Taylor and Whiting 1958:199; Urdang et al. 1985:82, 560, 709; Whiting 1989:337).

The Origin of the Proverb

Turning to bona fide proverbs that express slanderous views concerning Native Americans, Green observes that the text "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" is "the only genuine proverb with reference to Indians in the [United] states" (1973:57). If only that were true. Unfortunately there are some other proverbs that have gained currency in the folk speech of this country. The equational statement "Indians will be Indians," which, despite its lack of a metaphor, clearly alludes to the belief that Indians would remain uncivilized savages no matter how hard white soldiers and settlers tried to change them, dates from 1766 (Whiting 1977:233). Another proverb that comments on the impossibility of civilizing the original inhabitants of this country, recorded in 1853, is "An Indian, a partridge, and a spruce tree can't be tamed" (Mieder et al. 1992:329; Stevenson 1948:2507; Taylor and Whiting 1958:199). And there is also the proverb "The Indian will come back to his blanket," originally meant to be slanderous, that was collected in Oregon around 1945 (Mieder et al. 1992:329). It implies that even those Indians who assimilated the ways of their white masters would, in due time, return to their primitive and traditional ways. From the same time, there is, finally, the proverb "Never trust an Indian," which was recorded in Kansas (Mieder et al. 1992:329). Who will be surprised, then, that the Honorable Alfred Benjamin Meacham, ex-Superintendent of Indian Affairs, had the audacity to write in his suspect book, *Wigwam and War-Path; or The Royal Chief in Chains*, that whether Indians were being cheated by the government or not was irrelevant: "It makes no difference. They are Indians, and three-fourths of the people of the United States *believe* and *say* that 'the best Indians are all under ground'" (1875:515, emphasis in original).[2] At another place in his book, Meacham poses the rhetorical question, "Do my readers wonder now that so many white men, along the frontier line, declare that all good 'Injins are three feet under the ground'?" (1875:198). And one year later, in his book *Wi-ne-ma (The Woman-Chief) and Her People*, Meacham cites yet a third variant of this frontier proverb, namely, "All good Indians are four foot [feet] under ground" (1876:35). There can be no doubt about the sad fact that Native Americans were declared proverbially dead by the middle of the 19th century, especially after the end of the American Civil War, when United States soldiers joined bigoted frontier settlers in a merciless campaign to kill off the native population of this giant land.

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The willfully planned and ruthlessly executed destruction of Native American peoples needed its battle slogan, a ready-made catchphrase that could help the perpetrators justify the inhumane treatment of their victims. The proverb that gained currency at the time and that can still be heard today is "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." It was indeed a devilish stroke of genius that created this dangerous slur. Its multisemanticity is grotesque to say the least: on the literal level it justified the actual mass slaughter of Indians by the military, and, on a more figurative level, it promoted the belief that Indians could only be "good" persons if they became Christians and took on the civilization of their white oppressors. Then they might be "good," but as far as their native Indian culture was concerned, they would, in fact, be dead. Be it by physical or spiritual death, Native Americans were doomed victims of perpetrators who acted in the name of manifest destiny while so-called innocent bystanders did nothing to prevent the holocaust of Native Americans.

Who coined the invective "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," which, unfortunately, fit the stereotypical worldview of three-quarters of the population of the United States in the late 19th century? Although most lexicographers attribute it to a remark allegedly made by General Philip Sheridan in 1869, the *terminus a quo* for this slur can be found in *The Congressional Globe* (1868).

During a debate on an "Indian Appropriation Bill" that took place on 28 May 1868 in the House of Representatives, James Michael Cavanaugh (1823–79), congressman from Montana, uttered the following words:

> I will say frankly that, in my judgment, the entire Indian policy of the country is wrong from its very inception. In the first place you offer a premium for rascality by paying a beggarly pittance to your Indian agents. The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. Butler] may denounce the sentiment as atrocious, but I will say that I like an Indian better dead than living. I have never in my life seen a good Indian (and I have seen thousands) except when I have seen a dead Indian. I believe in the Indian policy pursued by New England in years long gone. I believe in the Indian policy which was taught by the great chieftain of Massachusetts, Miles Standish. I believe in the policy that exterminates the Indians, drives them outside the boundaries of civilization, because you cannot civilize them. Gentlemen may call this very harsh language, but perhaps they would not think so if they had had my experience in Minnesota and Colorado. In Minnesota the almost living babe has been torn from its mother's womb; and I have seen the child, with its young heart palpitating, nailed to the window-sill. I have seen women who were scalped, disfigured, outraged. In Denver, Colorado Territory, I have seen women and children brought in scalped. Scalped why? Simply because the Indian was "upon the war-path," to satisfy the devilish and barbarous propensities. . . . The Indian will make a treaty in the fall, and in the spring he is again "upon the war-path." The torch, the scalping-knife, plunder, and desolation follow wherever the Indian goes. . . .
>
> My friend from Massachusetts [Mr. Butler] has never passed the barrier of the frontier. All he knows about Indians (the gentleman will pardon me for saying it) may have been gathered I presume from the brilliant pages of the author of "The Last of the Mohicans" or from the lines of the poet Longfellow in "Hiawatha." The gentleman has never yet seen the Indian upon the

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war-path. He has never been chased, as I have been, by these red devils—who seem to be the pets of eastern philanthropists. [*Congressional Globe* 1868:2638][3]

The sentence "I have never in my life seen a good Indian except when I have seen a dead Indian" is, of course, a mere prose utterance that lacks many of the poetic and formal markers of traditional proverbs save for its parallel structure. Yet it is easily noticeable that this subjective sentence contains the clear possibility of being shortened into the much more proverbial formula "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." Unfortunately, James Michael Cavanaugh was expressing boldly, in the House of Representatives, what most Americans felt, if not said, as well.

Indians and death were tragically connected in the frontier worldview, and it should not be surprising that United States soldiers and their officers shared this negative view of Native Americans. Major William Shepherd described the general stereotype in his book *Prairie Experiences:*

People who know nothing about Indians look at them at first with curiosity, which soon is mixed with a little contempt; but those who have had much to do with them in wars dislike their presence, and, knowing their habits, are often nervous and apprehensive of treachery. It would be a meritorious deed, from an Indian point of view, for a band to murder a single white man, if it could be done with perfect safety in regard to their skins. . . . The possibility of the Indian being converted to any civilized or useful purposes is a chimera; he will be a wild man, or he will die out; his inherited disposition will prevent his ever being a satisfactory member of a settled community. On the frontier a good Indian means a "dead Indian." Whether the Indians have deserved, or brought on themselves, the injuries they have suffered, and to what extent the treatment might have been ameliorated by honesty in the agents employed by the Government, and by a more humanitarian spirit in the people who have ousted them, can matter little at present. The Indian must go, is going, and will soon be gone. It is his luck. [1884:61–63]

This cruel passage from 1884 can be contrasted with the thoughts expressed two years later by Vicar Alfred Gurney, an Englishman, in his book *A Ramble Through the United States* (1886). Notice that, although Shepherd's statement, "On the frontier a good Indian means a 'dead Indian,' " has not quite yet reached the final proverbial form, Gurney makes it perfectly clear that the proverb "A good Indian is a dead Indian" was well established in America by 1886:

The story of Indian warfare is no doubt one of bloodshed, cruelty, and outrage; but, if they resented with the ferocity of savages the intrusion of the white men who appropriated their hunting grounds and gave them no quarter, let it not be forgotten that they responded generously to the appeal of those who, consecrated by the hands of poverty and pain, spoke to them in the Name of a crucified King, and proclaimed the gospel of peace and goodwill. Not yet, I think, are white men civilized enough to handle savages successfully. And of all savages the red man, perhaps, demands the greatest patience, courtesy, and forbearance. Not yet have we learnt to put in practice the divine method, though the experience of ages demonstrates the futility of every other, of overcoming evil, not with evil, but with good. The Government of the United States is at length earnestly endeavoring to do tardy justice to the conquered race; but it was distressing

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to hear again and again from American lips the remark that "a *good* Indian is a *dead* Indian." For my own part I cannot believe that a people whose dark eyes are so wistful and dreamy, whose speech is so musical, and whose language so full of poetry, can be hopelessly degraded, or doomed to extinction. [1886:28–29]

Positive as this assessment might seem at first glance, Gurney nevertheless endorses attempts to "civilize" Native Americans by converting them to Christianity, thereby destroying their traditional beliefs and culture. The difference between the soldiers and militant people of the frontier, on the one hand, and the Christian missionaries, on the other, was one of degree, for, whereas one group intended to change the perceived savages by the sword, the other group intended to convert them by the word of God.

For the historical survey of the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" it is of considerable importance to notice that the early proverbial variants cited in the passages from 1884 and 1886 are *not* associated with any particular author. This was also not the case with the three variants about Indians belonging several feet below the ground from the 1870s, cited earlier in this article. It is also a well-established fact that, although "conceivably a proverb may for a time be associated with the inventor's name, all ascriptions to definite persons must be looked upon with suspicion" (A. Taylor 1985:38). And yet, such an ascription of the proverb under discussion here was in fact suggested by Edward Ellis in his book *The History of Our Country: From the Discovery of America to the Present Time* (1900[1895]). Entitling a short paragraph "Sheridan's Bon Mot," Ellis relates the following event from an eyewitness account of Captain Charles Nordstrom:

It was the writer's good fortune to be present when General Sheridan gave utterance to that *bon mot* which has since become so celebrated. It was in January, 1869, in camp at old Fort Cobb, Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, shortly after Custer's fight with Black-Kettle's band of Cheyennes. Old Toch-a-way (Turtle Dove), a chief of the Comanches, on being presented to Sheridan, desired to impress the General in his favor, and striking himself a resounding blow on the breast, he managed to say: "Me, Toch-a-way; me good Injun." A quizzical smile lit up the General's face as he set those standing by in a roar by saying: "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead." [Ellis 1900 (1895):1485]

This anecdotal paragraph, with its author's obvious delight in telling the gruesomely "humorous" event, appears of questionable authenticity. General Philip Sheridan (1831–88) repeatedly denied having made such a statement, but there is no doubt that Sheridan was known as a bigot and Indian hater, as the historian Paul Andrew Hutton has shown by entitling a chapter of his book, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (1985), "Forming Military Indian Policy: 'The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian.' " It is of interest, however, that Hutton does not directly quote the statement allegedly made by Sheridan, "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead," but rather uses its more generalized and powerful proverbial form, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," which became synonymous with the Indian policy of Sheridan and

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most other generals of the period. As Stephen Ambrose puts it so clearly in his account of the parallel lives of the two American warriors, *Crazy Horse and Custer:*

> Frontier posts reverberated with tough talk about what would be done to the Indians, once caught, and it became an article of faith among the Army officers that "you could not trust an Indian." Sheridan's famous remark, "The only good Indian I ever saw was dead," was often and gleefully quoted. [1975:310]

Sheridan's defenders have tried to disclaim his having coined this proverb, and they are technically correct, for it will probably never be known whether the proverb developed from Sheridan's alleged statement or whether his ill-conceived utterance was a subjective reformulation of the proverb already in currency. In 1904 Brigadier-General Michael V. Sheridan, in his new and enlarged edition of the *Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan*, writes apologetically that "some 'fool friend' in Montana attributed to General Sheridan the expression that 'a dead Indian is the only good Indian,' and, though he immediately disavowed the inhuman epigram, his assailants continued to ring the changes on it for months" (1904:II, 464–465). Another scholar who tried to clear General Sheridan's name was Carl Rister, who begins the preface of his book, *Border Command: General Phil Sheridan in the West*, with the following defensive remarks:

> Sheridan's foes charged that he had said, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." It is improbable that he made such a statement. That was not his policy. But he did believe that Indians must be taught that crime does not pay; that, if murder and theft were committed by either red man or white, punishment would be swift and sure. Moral suasion, he argued, could not always be used even among the most enlightened people; courts and law enforcement agencies were necessary. In this, Sheridan had enthusiastic support—not only of his officers and men, but also of the border people. To his enemies, Sheridan was haughty, unbending, and scornful; to his subordinates he was "Little Phil," a man of fiery temperament, caustic, impetuous, savage when his plans were not properly executed, never sparing himself or others, but fair and generous when the occasion demanded. Physically, he was a small man, but every inch a leader, strong and magnetic, honored, loved, and feared. [1974:vii–viii]

In spite of Rister's attempt to whitewash the career of this Civil War general by stating that in the late 1860s Sheridan turned his attention to fighting Indians as so many other officers and soldiers did, the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" has become solidly attached to Sheridan's name.

As already stated, it is not known which individual actually coined the proverbial slogan. It probably was not Sheridan, and it also was not an even more famous, or rather infamous, Indian fighter who made the following remarks at a speech in January of 1886 in New York:

> "I suppose I should be ashamed to say that I take the Western view of the Indian. I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every ten are,

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and I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth. The most vicious cowboy has more moral principle than the average Indian. Turn three hundred low families of New York into New Jersey, support them for fifty years in vicious idleness, and you will have some idea of what the Indians are. Reckless, revengeful, fiendishly cruel, they rob and murder, not the cowboys, who can take care of themselves, but the defenseless, lone settlers on the plains. As for the soldiers, an Indian chief once asked Sheridan for a cannon. 'What! Do you want to kill my soldiers with it?' asked the general. 'No,' replied the chief, 'want to kill the cowboy; kill soldier with a club.' "[4] [As quoted in Hagedorn 1921:355]

The person who said these words was that "rough rider" who published his racist and expansionist views and an account of his exploits on the American frontier in his acclaimed book *The Winning of the West* (1889)—Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), who became President of the United States only five years after making these hateful comments. The fact that Roosevelt included the proverb in a speech in 1886 in the eastern city of New York, far removed from the racial strife at the frontier, is a clear indication that the proverb and its discriminatory message had permeated the American consciousness by that time.

Lexicographical History of the Proverb

Lexicographers first began to record variants of "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" in the early 20th century. Gurney Benham registered Sheridan's alleged utterance, classifying it as a political phrase, in his *Complete Book of Quotations* (1926:459b). Other lexicographers did the same, with H. L. Mencken in 1960 and Bergen Evans in 1968 attributing the same statement, more or less fittingly, to another famous Civil War general who became an Indian fighter, William Tecumseh Sherman (1820–91) (Evans 1968:345; Mencken 1960:585). The editors of two more recent books of quotations from 1988 have gone back to giving Sheridan credit for this statement (Carruth and Ehrlich 1988:55; Daintich et al. 1988:167). There are, however, also numerous authors of quotation dictionaries who list the actual proverb rather than Sheridan's phrase. As early as 1934, Burton Stevenson, in his *Home Book of Quotations*, had it both ways, citing the proverb as the major heading and then referring to Sheridan's statement in an explanatory note (1947[1934]:976). It is here that a major reference tool begins the partial identification of the frontier proverb with General Sheridan. Seven years later the editors of *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (1941) followed suit and went one step further. They merely cited the actual proverb and attached Philip Sheridan's name to it. The subsequent editors of the second and third editions of this classic work have identical entries, thus playing their lexicographical part in spreading the information that Sheridan coined this stereotypical proverb.[5] The American competitor, Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*,[6] does the Oxford editors one better. Christopher Morley, as the editor of the 11th edition, lists Sheridan's remark for the first time in this important reference work. He repeats the same information in the 12th edition. In 1955 the unnamed editor of the 13th edition added the following comment after quoting Sheridan's statement: "The

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phrase is more often heard in the version 'The only good Indian is a dead Indian.' " Emily Morison Beck, the editor of the two subsequent editions of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*,[7] kept the identical entry, thus at least indicating to readers that there is a difference between Sheridan's alleged comment and the folk proverb. Yet quotation dictionaries of lesser value and distribution have, since 1942, usually just listed the proverb with Philip Sheridan's name attached to it, a scholarly phenomenon that shows how lexicographers blindly copy from one another (Cohen and Cohen 1960:364; Davidoff 1942:153).

Obviously, paremiographers have also played their role in registering the folk proverb in newer proverb collections. It is interesting to note that it was the British scholar Vincent Stuckey Lean who listed the early variant, "A good Indian is a dead Indian," as an American proverb for the first time in 1902, in his *Proverbs Relating to the United Kingdom . . . Together with a few English Estimates of Other Nations and Places*, after having found it in Gurney's *A Ramble Through the United States* (1886) discussed above (Lean 1969[1902]; I. 282). The next reference comes only in 1931, this time by the dean of international paremiology, Archer Taylor, who in his book *The Proverb* makes the terse comment that the proverb " 'The only good Indian is a dead Indian' breathes the air of our western frontier" (1985[1931]:9–10). Admittedly, that does not say much, but it indicates that Taylor recognized this text as a bona fide folk proverb from the American frontier that had long had currency throughout the United States and did not need to provide the apocryphal attribution to Sheridan.

Abraham Roback includes the slight variant "The only good Indian is a dead one," calling it an American "slogan originating in the Colonial period, when the Indians became a real menace, massacring hundreds of the new settlers," in his *Dictionary of International Slurs* (1979[1944]:181). Although Roback is incorrect in dating the origin of the proverb to the 17th or at least 18th century, he does give an authentic picture of the sociopolitical problems that existed between the Native Americans and the early settlers. In his fascinating book, *Builders of the Bay Colony*, in the especially enlightening chapter "John Eliot [1604–1690], Apostle to the Indians," Samuel Eliot Morison describes these stereotypical tensions by citing the 19th-century proverbial invective as an appropriate description of this sad state of affairs:

> That same autumn of 1646, the General Court appointed Eliot one of a committee to select and purchase land from the Indians, at the colony's expense, "for the encouragement of the Indians to live in a more orderly way amongst us." Yet from the start he encountered suspicion and hostility among his own people, whose attitude was always a heavy obstacle to his work. Frenchmen and Spaniards mingled easily with the American Indians; but the English pride of race forbade [this]. Your New England settler quickly acquired what has become the traditional attitude of the English-speaking pioneer "A good Indian is a dead Indian." To him the native was a dirty, lazy, treacherous beast: "the arrow that flieth by day," and "the terror that flieth by night." [1930:295–296]

Things might have become a bit more civilized in the colonies some good hundred years later, when influential thinkers like Patrick Henry, in 1787, even

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advocated interracial marriages between Indians and whites. Reflecting on "The Indian Contribution to the American Revolution," Leroy Eid comments that

> one often hears that the frontier's motto was "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." Perhaps this cliché—born in the nineteenth century's plains wars—was true of some frontiers, but it was not anywhere universally true of the earlier frontiers where whites met vibrant and confident Indian cultures. [Eid 1981:290–291]

Nevertheless, it is a known fact that Native Americans were also exterminated or marginalized in the colonies. That is exactly what the bigoted James Michael Cavanaugh meant in his 1868 speech in the United States House of Representatives, when he said to Mr. Butler from Massachusetts:

> I believe in the Indian policy pursued by New England in years long gone. I believe in the Indian policy which was taught by the great chieftain of Massachusetts, Miles Standish. I believe in the policy that exterminates the Indians, drives them outside the boundaries of civilization, because you cannot civilize them. [*Congressional Globe* 1868:2638]

Starting with Burton Stevenson's large volume, *The Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims, and Famous Phrases* (1948), all the major Anglo-American proverb collections contain the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" (Adams 1968:128; Mathews 1951:715; Mieder et al. 1992:329; Simpson 1982:98; Stevenson 1948:1236; Whiting 1989:337), with the notable exception of *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (1970). Smaller regional collections bear witness to the established proverbiality and currency of this stereotypical frontier wisdom throughout the United States. In fact, folklorist Helen Pearce includes six proverbial invectives with explanatory comments in a list of "Folk Sayings in a Pioneer Family of Western Oregon" that her family was using (which originally reached Oregon in the 1850s) when she collected them in the early 1940s:

> There's no good Indian but a dead Indian.
> (This attitude is ungenerous, but it is derived from the experience of some of the early settlers.)
>
> He's an Indian giver.
> (He is a person who gives something and takes it back again, an ungracious giver.)
>
> He's off the reservation.
> (He is running wild; or doing something unusual; or appears very green and unsophisticated. The saying is derived from the sometimes wild behavior of Indians when permitted to leave their reservations and enter the white man's towns.)
>
> He was drunker than an Indian.
> (The pioneers found that Indians did not carry liquor well; hence this pioneer saying about a person obstreperously drunk.)
>
> He works harder than an Indian.
> (Often ironically said in western Oregon, where most of the Indians worked very little.)

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Wild as an Indian; sly (or cunning) as an Indian.
(These are examples of numerous uncomplimentary comparisons.) [1946:236–237]

"The only good Indian is a dead Indian" proverb was also collected in 1963 in Pennsylvania, and in 1965 in Illinois (Barbour 1965:98; Barrick 1963:170; Kingsbury 1988:130), and the Folklore Archives at the University of California at Berkeley contain six additional citations that folklore students collected between 1964 and 1986 in California. The following notes on the comments made by a 50-year-old American informant to a student folklore collector in 1969 are quite telling:

The only good Indian is a dead Indian.

My informant learned this when she was a young girl [c. 1925] growing up in Carson City, Nevada. There was an Indian reservation near where they lived, and the whites of Carson City were very discriminating toward the Indians and looked upon them as quite inferior. She heard this used by many people in town. It was generally said as a comment after someone else would tell of the latest exploits of some "drunken" Indian. This comment meant that they were only good when they were dead, so all Indians alive are bad. My informant believes that this phrase came out of Indian wars and was first said by either General Grant or Lee, she can't remember which.[8]

This text includes alarming testimony of the widespread disrespect of Native Americans in this country and once again makes clear how confused the attribution of a proverb to a certain historical person can get. A second text from the Berkeley Folklore Archives is dated from 1977 and includes horrid comments concerning the "humor" of this invective and the student collector's insightful reactions:

The only good Indian is a dead Indian.

Donald [Geddes] admits that this is a very racist statement. He doesn't really believe it but can still find the humor involved with it. He remembers that people at college in Palo Alto used to say it a lot, circa 1955. But he didn't think he learned it from anyone in particular. He is sure that he heard it in a discussion concerning Indians, but always in jest.

I think that Mr. Geddes and his friends believe the saying more than they will admit. It reflects American culture because once long ago the Indians possessed our continent. Then we took it from them. When they protest, a good comeback is "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."[9]

A third student collector obtained the following even more recent information from a California informant in 1986 that further illustrates how this prejudicial proverb is part of the worldview of many Americans:

The only good Indian is a dead Indian.

My informant is a native of North Dakota where she tells me there were many Indian reservations. She learned this proverb when she was a very young child [c. 1923]. She cannot remember any specific sources for the proverb; it was just something that you would hear at home or at school. People in North Dakota were extremely prejudiced against the Indians because they had

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the reputation of never working, always drinking. They were not very honest people and were believed by many to be murderers and looters. Indians were not respected by the white people at all. Thus, we can understand the reasoning behind the proverb.[10]

With all this documentation from various published and oral sources, my co-editors and I felt justified in ascribing a general geographical distribution throughout the United States to the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" in our recent *Dictionary of American Proverbs* (Mieder et al. 1992)—blatant reality did not permit us to act otherwise, for excluding this proverbial slur would have been dishonest, it only would have hidden or whitewashed the truth.

The Proverb in Literature and the Mass Media

Just as this proverb persists in oral communication, so it also permeates written sources from scholarly books to novels, from magazines to newspapers, and even on to cartoons.[11] In Mary Rinehart's detective novel *The Circular Staircase*, for example, one finds the double statement: "Just as the only good Indian is a dead Indian, so the only safe defaulter is a dead defaulter" (1908:354). Although the proverb actually serves only to introduce a characterization of a male person obsessed with money, it nevertheless is used to describe the man's dishonesty by comparing him to the stereotypical devious Indian. This early reference shows already what is to become a pattern in more modern uses of the proverb. Often, instead of being cited, it is reduced to the formula "The only good X is a dead X," giving its speaker or author a ready-made proverbial slogan with all the negative and prejudicial connotations of its original proverbial form. Merely four years after Rinehart's formulaic use of the proverb, Edgar Burroughs followed suit in his futuristic novel *A Princess of Mars* (1987[1912]), describing the heroine who despite "her tenderness and womanly sweetness was still a Martian, and to a Martian the only good enemy is a dead enemy; for every dead foeman means so much more to divide between those who live" (Burroughs 1987:72).[12] This variation indirectly maintains the victimization of Native Americans but generalizes it to include enemies of any type.

This proverbial formula was also used as a slogan against the Germans during World Wars I and II. Robert Graves reports a Canadian-Scot's account of war atrocities in his book *Good-bye to All That*:

They sent me back with three bloody prisoners, you see, and one started limping and groaning, so I had to keep on kicking the sod down the trench. He was an officer. It was getting dark and I felt fed up, so I thought: "I'll have a bit of game." I had them covered with the officer's revolver and made 'em open their pockets without turning around. Then I dropped a Mills bomb in each, with the pin out, and ducked behind a traverse. Bang, bang, bang! No more bloody prisoners. No good Fritzes but dead 'uns'. [Graves 1957(1929):184–185]

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In another British account by Bombardier "X" (pseudonym), *So This Was War!* (1930), editor Shaw Desmond introduces this demythologization of World War I:

> If you believe that "the only good Germans were dead Germans," and that every British Tommy lusted only to kill the Boche, and was without religion, read this boy [the bombardier] who writes: "We may curse and swear, but it's only bluster. Deep down in our hearts, we pray. The Germans must pray, too. They're in it, the same as we are. They have mothers, and wives, and children, and the same God as we have. It is very difficult, this War. I don't understand it a bit." [Desmond 1930:11–12]

From 1930 there is yet another British variant directed against the Germans: "There's only one good Boche, and that's a dead one" (Whiting 1989:337).[13] There is no doubt that variants of the American proverb were used repeatedly by the British people against the Germans, as can be seen from the cited examples and the following statement from Anthony Gilbert's *Missing from Her Home:* "We used to say in the First War—the only good German's a dead German" (1969:124). Such variants also show, of course, the regrettable internationalization of the slanderous proverb and its underlying proverbial formula.

During World War II Agatha Christie includes the following dialogue between a British woman and a German refugee in her detective novel *N or M?:*

> "You're a refugee. . . . This country's at War. You're a German." She smiled suddenly. "You can't expect the mere man in the street—literally the man in the street—to distinguish between bad Germans and good Germans, if I may put it so crudely."
>
> He still stared at her. His eyes, so very blue, were poignant with suppressed feeling. Then, suddenly, he too smiled. He said:
>
> "They said of Red Indians, did they not, that a good Indian was a dead Indian?" He laughed. "To be a good German I must be on time at my work. Please. Good morning." [Christie 1941:27]

In yet another British war novel, *Green Hazard*, by Manning Coles, one of the characters is described as a bit suspect by once again varying the proverb: "Good chap, isn't he, though I find that placid manner rather terrifying sometimes. I know 'the only good German is a dead German,' but he enjoys killing them. I don't. What's a duty to me is a pleasure to him" (Coles 1945:237). And C. Day Lewis, in his autobiographical work, *The Buried Day*, gives a final view of how British schoolboys knew of this proverbial anti-German slogan:

> Certainly, racial hatred was not in the curriculum at Wilkie's [school]. We were not encouraged to think along the lines of "the only good German is a dead German," nor were we affected by the adult hysteria which looted shops with German names above them and banned Beethoven from the concert halls. We played English v. German war games, of course, but they meant little more to us than Greeks v. Trojans. . . . [1960:86]

Besides the German enemy there was also the Japanese enemy to contend with during World War II. It will surprise no one to learn that the proverb

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responded to this menace as well, as Richard Butler documents in his novel, *A Blood-Red Sun at Noon* (1980), about the war theater in the Pacific:

> "Ye believe all the propaganda our side have stuffed into your head—things like bishops blessing the flag and telling you God's on our side, not theirs. Generals telling you that the only good Jap is a dead Jap." [1980:207]

In the late 1960s there also circulated the anti-Vietnamese variant: "The only good gook is a dead gook."[14] And yet another "national" variant of the proverb appears in a book on early Spanish conquests in South America, explaining that the native population doubtlessly thought of many of the intruders in terms of "The only good Spaniard was a dead Spaniard" (Sprague and de Camp 1964:270). There is clearly no end to applying this powerful slogan against any military enemy as a propagandistic tool. Its adaptability as a national stereotype is clearly without limit.

The same is true for some of the following trivializations of the original proverbial invective. Some of them might even seem "humorous" in their absurdity, but it must not be forgotten that the actual proverb ("The only good Indian is a dead Indian") is subconsciously juxtaposed with these seemingly harmless variations, thus continuing the slur against Native Americans in a camouflaged manner. In the following list it will be noticed that the texts are usually built on the structure "The only good X is a dead X," but there are also some cases where one of the adjectives is altered:

> The only good poacher is a dead poacher. [Loder 1933:173]
> The only good teacher is a dead teacher. [Leacock 1942:64]
> The only good mouse is a dead mouse. [Gallico 1957:40]
> The only good raccoon was a dead one. [Rue 1964:82]
> The only good cop (pig) is a dead cop (pig). [1968][15]
> The only good snake was a dead snake. [A. Lewis 1970:101]
> The only good body's a dead one. [Kenrick 1970]
> The only good grades are good grades. [Priestly 1970:17]
> The only good cow's a dead cow. [Wilson 1980:317]
> The only good photojournalist is a live photojournalist. [Chapnick 1986:18]
> The only good fish is a fresh fish. [Pépin 1990:C10]
> The only good priest [is a dead priest]. [Zubro 1991]

As can readily be seen from these variants, they express, to a large degree, people's anxieties about such things as murders (in detective novels) and animals, such as raccoons, snakes, and mice, which they consider to be pests. Of the 12 examples cited above it might be worthwhile to cite at least the "mouse" variant in its literary context. Paul Gallico describes the art of "mousehole watching," which, for one of his characters, is "a full-time job":

> It isn't catching mice, mind you, that is the most necessary. Anyone can catch a mouse, it is a trick at all; it is putting them off and keeping them down [by locating the mousehole, so that

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> important. You will hear sayings like—"The only good mouse is a dead mouse," but that is only half of it. The only good mouse is the mouse that isn't there at all. What you must do if you are at all principled about your work, is to conduct a war of nerves on the creatures. This calls for both time, energy and a good deal of cleverness which I wouldn't begrudge if I wasn't expected to do so many other things besides. [Gallico 1957:40]

Sure, this is a bit of humor, perhaps, especially if one continues to read another two pages about this seemingly futile exercise. However, the careful reader might have a rude awakening when the "mouse" variant of the traditional proverb brings to mind the fate of the Native Americans being hunted down by superior weapons and strength just like defenseless little mice. Behind the animalistic trivialization of the slanderous proverb hovers inescapably the historical truth of human extermination.

That this proverb about Native Americans has been, in fact, easily transferred to African-Americans is documented in Joseph Carr's novel *The Man with Bated Breath*. There, a prejudiced white man from the southern United States makes the following comment about an African-American servant named Jesse: " 'That is one of the houseboys. Honest enough if you discount the saying in these parts that the only honest nigger is a dead nigger" (Carr 1934:33). George Bernard Shaw's compelling introduction to his drama *On the Rocks* (1986[1934]) documents the use of the proverb in attacking other minorities as well. With Nazi Germany on the rise, Shaw prophetically writes about Germany's plans to achieve racial purity and Jewish extirpation in a section entitled "Present Exterminations." He then gives a horrifying account of what he calls "Previous Attempts" by racial or nationalistic purists to rid themselves of unwanted members of society:

> The extermination of what the exterminators call inferior races is as old as history. "Stone dead hath no fellow" said Cromwell when he tried to exterminate the Irish. "The only good nigger is a dead nigger" say the Americans of the Ku-Klux temperament. "Hates any man the thing he would not kill?" said Shylock naively. But we white men, as we absurdly call ourselves in spite of the testimony of our looking glasses, regard all differently colored folk as inferior species. Ladies and gentlemen class rebellious laborers with vermin. . . . What we are confronted with now is a growing perception that if we desire a certain type of civilization and culture we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit into it. [Shaw 1986(1934):144–146]

By 1934 Shaw drew attention to the fact that racial fanatics refer to undesirable people as "vermin," thus robbing them of their basic human dignity. The Nazis did exactly that as time went on, degrading, in particular, the Jewish population with verbal and proverbial invectives to "vermin," as I have shown in my 1982 study, "Proverbs in Nazi Germany." In light of what happened in Germany and Europe under National Socialism in the many concentration camps, and in consideration of the harm done to Native Americans, African-Americans, or any other minority, any variant of the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" seems harmful, especially the "innocent" one about what to do with mice.

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In the meantime, the use of the proverb as a direct slur against Native Americans continues, an ever-ready invective to be cited to keep the painful stereotype alive. In John Buchan's frontier novel *Salute to Adventures* (1915), a young man is willing to give the native population the benefit of the doubt by exclaiming, " 'But they tell me the Indians are changed nowadays. They say they've settled down to peaceful ways like any Christian' " (pp. 74–75). In response to this, a more knowledgeable old-timer says grimly, and without any feeling of reconciliation or understanding about the plight of the original inhabitants of this land:

> "Put your head into a catamount's mouth, if you please, but never trust an Indian. The only good kind is the dead kind. I tell you we're living on the edge of hell. It may come this year or next year or five years hence, but come it will." [Buchan 1915:74–75]

Fear and hate combine to accept such blind judgments. In yet another detective novel by Carolyn Wells, with the title *The Wooden Indian* (1935), a person reacts to "the furious wars they [the Indians] waged" with the piece of wisdom, " 'I agree with Ben Jonson [1573?–1637], or whoever said it, that the only good Indian is a dead Indian' " (Wells 1935:35). Observe also such typical paragraphs as the following two. In Laura Ingalls Wilder's celebrated children's book *Little House on the Prairie* (1935), there is the following passage, which must have ingrained the proverb in thousands of young readers' minds:

> Mrs. Scott said she hoped to goodness they would have no trouble with Indians. Mr. Scott had heard rumors of trouble. She said, "Land knows, they'd never do anything with this country themselves. All they do is roam around over it like wild animals. Treaties or no treaties, it's land belongs to folks that'll farm it. That's only common sense and justice." She did not know why the government made treaties with Indians. The only good Indian was a dead Indian. The very thought of Indians made her blood run cold. [Wilder 1953:211]

And in Rosemary Taylor's novel *Chicken Every Sunday*, one reads "Miss Gilley was scared to death of Indians. Even though Father told her there hadn't been any bad Indians around Tucson for years, Miss Gilley still felt the only good Indian was a dead Indian" (1943:6–7). Rationality is not part of stereotyping, but changing the truth and perpetuating lies are definite ingredients. And who would ever have thought that one of America's classical children's books played its part in spreading the frontier stereotype to younger generations who had nothing to fear from Native Americans living on isolated reservations.

The Continued Use of the Proverb in Popular Literature

There is no end in sight as far as eradicating this proverb from common parlance. Maxwell Bodenheim's comment in his book *My Life and Loves in Greenwich Village* (1954) appears to be saying just that: "There is no good Indian but a dead Indian, we are told by the grandsons of men who have been scalped" (1954:130); that is, the image of the Indian savage will always remain

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among us. The *New Yorker* magazine in 1957 even published a cartoon showing two frontiersmen and a Native American around a campfire, with one of the frontiersmen saying: "I say the only good Indian is a dead Indian. Present company excepted, of course." Is that so-called Eastern intellectual sophistication or, rather, a sign that even the crème de la crème of this society is not free of prejudice? Who then can be surprised to hear common people making such generalizations as "That only went to show that the only good Indian was a dead Indian" (Eberhart 1970:128), or " 'They're the Indians—and the only good Injun is a dead one, you can take that from me' " (Price 1978:118). And is it conceivable that people actually compose jokes around this most hurtful slander against Native Americans, just as terribly sick minds have come up with Auschwitz jokes? (see Dundes 1987[1979]:19–38). The *New Yorker* cartoon just mentioned is a small example of this type of sick humor, but even more upsetting is a short story by Mack Reynolds entitled *Good Indian* (1964). In its mere nine pages the author describes three Indians coming to see Mortimer Dowling, Director of the Department of Indian Affairs, who thought that "the last Indian died almost ten years ago." Yet, here the Native Americans suddenly are, and they awaken the director out of his cushy job of doing nothing. The Indians claim that they have come to sign a treaty for themselves and the 55 surviving members of the Seminole tribe, and they are well prepared to do so with LL.D.s from Harvard. After some arguing back and forth, they declare that they want Florida, and at the height of frustration, the director comes up with the idea that it's time for lunch. This is where the author makes a break in his grotesque narrative, only to pick it up again with the director sitting at his desk the next morning in absolutely miserable bodily shape. His receptionist, Millie Fullbright, observes how disgusting it was of him to get "absolutely stoned" when he finally had something to do for a change. But the hung over director only points with his finger at the signed treaty on his desk, upon which the receptionist exclaims in astonishment:

> "Heavens to Betsy, the treaty. And all three of their signatures on it. How in the world did you ever—" Mortimer Dowling allowed himself a self-satisfied leer.
>
> "Miss Fullbright haven't you ever heard the old saying *The only good Indian is a dead*—"
>
> Millie's hand went to her mouth. "Mr. *Dowling*, you mean . . . you put the slug on all three of these poor Seminoles? But . . . but how about the remaining fifty-five of them. You can't possibly kill them all!"
>
> "Let me finish," Mortimer Dowling growled. "I was about to say, *The only good Indian is a dead drunk Indian*. If you think I'm hanging over, you should see Charlie Horse and his wisenheimer pals. Those redskins couldn't handle firewater back in the old days when the Dutch did them out of Manhattan with a handful of beads and a gallon of applejack and they still can't. Now, go away and do a crossword puzzle, or something." [Reynolds 1964:54]

The joke centers on the proverb "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," but the author not only bases his short story on this terrible stereotype, but also alludes, of course, to the other proverbial invective of being "drunker than an

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Indian." This is a tasteless, racially motivated joke, and it shows the tenacity of proverbial stereotypes in the United States today.

Six years after Mack Reynolds's short story about the proverbial "good Indian" appeared, Dee Brown published his masterpiece, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,* which contains the already-mentioned chapter, "The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian," about the savage exploits of General Philip Sheridan and many of his officers and troops. Anybody who has read this book, and especially this chapter, cannot possibly see any humor in this proverb. The fact that this proverb is still used today is a very sad comment on this society and its behavior toward Native Americans. As long as the white majority population of the United States retains its prejudices and stereotypes about this minority population, the proverb will not cease to exist. Wherever it will be uttered or written, it will expose blatant inhumanity toward Native Americans. The conscious attempt to refrain from using the proverb might at least help bring about some changes toward a better life for Native Americans, one of pride and dignity befitting the indigenous people of this great country—better the proverb die a long overdue death than any Native American get hurt by it again.

Notes

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[1]As quoted in R. Pearce 1967:55. The banquet where the toast was given is reported in the journal of Major James Norris Cook 1887:225–226).

[2]I owe this and the following three important references from Meacham to Jan Harold Brunvand (1961:75).

[3]I owe the reference to this significant quotation to Stevenson (1948:1236). See also Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1992:329.

[4]I was unable to locate the entire speech in any of the many volumes on Theodore Roosevelt that I checked. The passage as it appears here is quoted from Hagedorn (1921:355). Parts of this passage from Hagedorn are also cited in Dyer (1980:86), Hart and Ferleger (1941:251), Hofstadter (1968:209), and Shames (1969:32). Dyer's book includes an important chapter on Roosevelt's prejudicial views of the "Indians" (1980:69–88). It might be of interest that this statement did not make it into W. M. Handy's *Maxims of Theodore Roosevelt* (1970[1903]), but Handy does cite Roosevelt's slogan "A good American is a good American" (1970[1903]:81).

[5]*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations,* 1st ed. (1941), 2d ed. (1953), 3d ed. (1979), s. v. "Sheridan, Philip." See also Boller and George (1989:118).

[6][Bartlett's] Familiar Quotations, 11th ed. (1941), 12th ed. (1949), s. v. "Sheridan, Philip."

[7][Bartlett's] Familiar Quotations, 13th ed. (1955), 14th ed. (1968), 15th ed. (1980), s. v. "Sheridan, Philip."

[8]This text was collected by Candace Bettencourt from Patricia Davis on 6 March 1969 in Berkeley, California. The student has added a note with a reference to Stevenson (1948), who mentions that the proverb is usually attributed to General Philip Sheridan. I would like to thank Frances Fischer and Alan Dundes for making this and the following two texts available to me.

[9]This text was recorded by Linda Armstrong from Donald Geddes on 19 November 1977 in Palo Alto, California.

[10]This text was collected by Anne Artoux from Marge Donovan on 28 November 1986 in San Mateo, California.

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[11]I would like to thank Patricia Mardeusz, Barbara Lambert, and Ruth Nolan from the Reference Department of the Bailey-Howe Library at the University of Vermont for getting many of the novels cited below for me through interlibrary loan.

[12]The book was originally published as *Under the Moon of Mars* by Norman Bean (pseudonym) in *All-Story Magazine* as a six-part serial, February through July 1912.

[13]Whiting claims that this variant is cited in Sassoon (1930:16), but I was not able to find it in that work.

[14]I owe this reference to my colleague Kevin McKenna, who recalls it from his student years at Oklahoma.

[15]I owe this text to my colleague Kevin McKenna, who recalls it from his student years at Oklahoma.

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Banning "Redskins" From the Sports Page: The Ethics and Politics of Native American Nicknames

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In February 1992, The *(Portland)* Oregonian *announced it would no longer use sports team names that readers may find offensive, such as Redskins, Redmen, Indians, and Braves. Many journalists have criticized* The Oregonian*'s decision, calling it an abandonment of the journalistic principles of objectivity and neutrality. This article addresses the ethical/political issues involved in the controversy through an examination of commentaries by journalists published in newspapers and public comments made by journalists critical of* The Oregonian. *After evaluating the explicit and implicit assumptions behind those criticisms of* The Oregonian, *a defense of the newspaper's decision that relies on more overtly political arguments than the paper's managers used will be offered.*

Images of Native Americans

A discussion of newspaper policy about this issue must start with the history of Euro-Americans' clash with North America's indigenous peoples and of contemporary political concerns—a story of genocide and continuing anti-Native American racism in the United States. The relationship is best understood as one of colonizer to colonized (Durham, 1992, p. 427), and an issue such as the naming of sports teams cannot be considered outside this political, economic, and cultural context.

Central to resistance to anti-Native American racism and liberatory change is (a) the elimination of incorrect information about and racist stereotyping of Native Americans that is prevalent in non-Native American culture, and (b) the dissemination of information and analyses that explain the past and present state of Native America (American Indian Media Task Force, 1991; Giago, 1991; Stedman, 1982). This article is con-

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cerned primarily with the elimination of incorrect information about and racist stereotyping of Native Americans.

Rouse and Hanson (1991) summarize the long-standing negative stereotypes of Native Americans as of people "living in the past, clinging to tribal ways and primitive beliefs ill-suited to success in modern society" (p. 3), and characterized by laziness, undependability, drunkenness, and general incompetence. Even depictions of positive characteristics—Native American wisdom or bravery, for example, are often in a racist context. Churchill (1992) pointed out that mainstream media routinely (a) frame Native Americans as "creatures from another time," (b) deny differences among Native American peoples by constructing a false all-encompassing "Indian," and (c) define Native American cultures through Eurocentric values (pp. 233-239). Hanson and Rouse (1987) suggested that while those stereotypes are slowly changing, they are deeply embedded in American historical and contemporary consciousness.

Many scholars have argued that negative stereotypes of Native Americans have been central to the justification and continuation of Euro-American colonization, as White literature and popular culture have constructed Native American culture as more primitive and less legitimate. According to Churchill (1992), stereotypes are "an historical requirement of an imperial process" by which Euro-Americans have been conditioned to accept a policy of "non-stop expropriation and genocide of the native population throughout U.S. history" (pp. 28-29). The key, Churchill argues, is not the specific images of Native Americans used, but the way in which they are consigned to a "mythical realm" (p. 38). The result, according to Deloria (1980), is that Native Americans "are forced to deal with American fantasies about the Indians of White imagination rather than the reality of the present" (p. xiv).

Sports Team Names

The issue of sports teams' use of Native American names and images has been widely discussed in the popular media of the 1990s, sparked by the Atlanta Braves baseball team and its fans' use of the "tomahawk chop," and the Washington Redskins football team's name. However, discussion and activism on this issue goes back at least two decades. American Indian Movement activist Russell Means threatened to sue the Cleveland Indians baseball team for defamation in 1972 over the team's Native American logo. In that same year, Stanford University changed its team name from "Indians" to "Cardinals," and other colleges and high schools have taken similar action, especially in recent years. A variety of local government bodies and agencies have received complaints or voted on resolutions that condemn the use of Native American names and mascots. Most recently, a group of Native Americans has gone to court to strip the Washington football team of federal trademark protection for "Redskins" (*Suzan Show Harjo, et al. v. Pro Football, Inc.*).

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To date, no professional team has changed its name or logos. Cleveland Indians officials argue that their name honors the first Native American professional baseball player, who played for Cleveland from 1897-1899. The Washington team, which also has refused to consider a change, has said the name "was never intended to offend anyone" and "has reflected the positive attributes of American Indians such as dedication, courage, and pride" (McCraw, 1992, p. B1).

For journalists, there are two questions to consider, one general and one specific to their trade. First, is it ethically and politically responsible for sports teams that have no connection to Native Americans to use Native American names and images for nicknames and logos? Second, if teams retain those names and logos, should news media outlets independently choose to stop using them in news accounts? The answers offered here are no and yes, respectively. Before arguing that case, this article will look at the industry's response to *The Oregonian*'s decision.

Published commentaries by journalists will be used to frame the issue and advance ethical and political arguments. Applicable commentaries were identified through a Lexis-Nexis search of all publications on the data base from the date of *The Oregonian*'s decision through February 1993. There were 134 stories that included commentaries and news accounts, some of which were short news items, often drawn from the same wire story. Stories in journalism reviews produced additional commentaries and comments from journalists at publications not on the data base.

No attempt will be made to assess the number of commentaries in support of and against *The Oregonian;* many of the stories took no clear position. This textual analysis focuses on themes and arguments used by journalists who disagreed with *The Oregonian*, working from the idea that in the journalists' responses can be found underlying ethical and political assumptions that guide their practice. All journalists do not hold these views, but these commentaries reflect commonly held viewpoints. Although all journalists do not take the same position on this issue, when journalists make arguments drawing on common notions about objectivity, as many of these commentaries do, they ignore important critiques and reach questionable conclusions.

The Policy and Journalists' Objections

Oregonian Editor William Hilliard (1992) announced the new policy with this statement:

> *The Oregonian* will immediately discontinue using sports teams' names and nicknames that many Americans feel are offensive to members of racial, religious, or ethnic groups. Initially, this will include references to Redskins, Redmen, Indians, and Braves. Others may be dropped if it becomes evident that they, too, are offensive. I have directed this action with the belief that these names tend to perpetuate stereotypes that damage the dignity and self-respect of many people in our society and that this harm far transcends any innocent entertainment or promotional value these names may have. America is a multicultural society and all of us have an absolute right to demand respect from our fellow citizens. *The Oregonian* is sensitive to the feelings of those in our society who are rightly offended today by names and nicknames that came into being when a majority in this country was insensitive to minority concerns. (p. D-1)

In a column that elaborated on the decision, Managing Editor Pete Thompson (1992) wrote that the paper's editors had decided (a) that the ban was not an infringement of anyone's First Amendment rights, (b) that editorializing on the issue would not have been enough, and (c) that newspapers could not wait for society or the teams to lead the way on this issue. The paper "will not be a passive participant in perpetuating racial or cultural stereotypes in our community," Thompson wrote (p. C9).

Other media outlets have not rushed to imitate *The Oregonian*. A Washington, DC radio station, WTOP, did briefly institute a ban on "Redskins" in March 1992. In response to criticism, the station manager quickly said he would research the issue to determine if the ban was supported by most Native Americans. In November 1992, the station was sold, the manager left, and the ban was officially lifted (Shapiro, 1992; Yorke, 1992).

Most of the journalists who wrote about or commented on the issue agreed that the names were offensive to some and probably should be phased out by the teams. Some commentators, however, argued there was no reason for changing the names and labeled the movement to end the use of Native American images as a misguided attempt to be "politically correct," and unworthy of serious consideration. It was these journalists who most vigorously trivialized the concerns of those who objected to the names. A number of journalists suggested that if the Redskins dropped that name, Scandinavians would have grounds to complain about the "Vikings," Christians about the "Fighting Devils," and animal-rights activists about the "Bears."

These journalists argued that people are becoming too sensitive to the possible offensiveness in language. From this point of view, the offensiveness of Native American nicknames is inherently subjective, and because there is no consensus, no collective decision should be made—"What one person sees as a masterpiece, another sees as a mess," (Moore, 1992, p. B2). Because the larger society should not take action, no action by the newspaper was necessary, they reasoned. These commentaries were more likely to be insulting, suggesting the issue was foolish. For example, one columnist blamed "a couple of fringe American Indian groups" for the trouble and called the paper "loony" (Knott, 1992).

That was, however, a minority view among the commentaries. The more common response to *The Oregonian's* decision by journalists was agreement that the use of Native American names and images for teams was problematic, but concern that the newspaper erred in taking independent action. The journalists who argued that media outlets should stay out of the controversy relied on a variation of the political-correctness argument that was tied directly to journalistic principles about objectivity, neutrality, and detachment from politics: Journalists should shy away from making overtly political decisions that affect the way they cover any story and should not change language because it may offend some readers. Gartner

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(1992), who has owned and edited newspapers, made these points in a *USA Today* commentary (Gartner was president of NBC News at the time):

> Newspapers are supposed to be mirrors and tribunes and records of society, journals and registers of fact—that's how they got their names. Their news pages are not supposed to be edited to bring about social change. That's dangerous, but it's happening. Increasingly, editors are responding to politically correct thinking, pulling punches with the truth, omitting relevant facts (names of alleged rape victims comes to mind) and views (not quoting purveyors of hate speech) to please "thought police" who want society to conform to their view of right and wrong. . . . Their view is simple: No one should do or say anything that will offend anyone else, especially them. That might be a good policy for dealing with your neighbor, but it's not a good way to edit newspapers. . . . The United States has an independent press for a reason: so the government will not control it, so it can be free to present all sides, all facts, all views. Sometimes, those sides are sickening, those facts are unpleasant, those views are distasteful. But that's what democracy is about. (p. A-11)

These passages summarize the position taken by many of the commentators: Journalists do their job best when they hold up a mirror to the world and let readers see the truth. Sometimes that involves stating truths that are unpleasant or airing opinions with which many disagree. The job of professional editors is to take the heat, both from pressure groups in society and the government, and print those truths in the face of complaints. If editors do that, democracy is served by the free flow of ideas. The consequences of journalists injecting themselves into a controversy such as this one are troubling for Gartner and others. A number of writers have warned of the perils of stepping onto the "slippery slope," suggesting that such "self-censorship" would snowball into greater, though unnamed, incidents of repression. As one writer put it:

> The step from a half-name to a half-truth is not a long one. When a newspaper begins using news stories to present a picture of the world as it would like it to be instead of the way it is, it becomes a little less of a newspaper and a little more of a propaganda sheet, no matter how noble its intentions. (Rand, 1992, p. A11)

Politics of News and Naming

All these criticisms of the decision to stop using Native American names and images were grounded in well-established journalistic conventions that are most easily summarized in the term *objectivity*. But as numerous scholars and media critics have pointed out, no decision about news selection, coverage, and language can be wholly objective. One of the central assertions of the critical literature is that news is made, not found, and that journalists are central to that process (e.g., Gitlin, 1980). As Tuchman (1978) puts it in her study of news conventions, "the act of making news is the act of constructing reality rather than a picture of reality" (p. 12).

Such critics show how news decisions are never neutral and always

political, framed by a system of power and based on unstated assumptions about the social, political, and economic order. *Political* in this context does not mean simply partisan, favoring one political party or position over another, but being part of the play of power in society. For example, a business story that accepts uncritically the tenets of capitalism (as most stories in mainstream media do) takes an unstated political stance and is not neutral. The act of constructing reality includes a multitude of political judgments.

Even one's choice of words has these political implications. As Hall (1982) put it, "language and representation involve the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping . . . the more active labour of *making things mean*" (p. 64). The power to name, represent, and define is not a trivial matter. In the case of Native Americans, the past has been rewritten by Euro-Americans to reflect the interests of a White power structure, and the language and images still used to represent Native Americans leave them "hopelessly trapped within the definitional power of the oppressor" (Churchill, 1992, p. 33).

The ethical and political arguments offered here are grounded in the assertion that language helps structure how we know the world, and, therefore, language always has political implications. Analyses of the use of language and images in news media must take into account power systems in which representations are created and circulated.

The Case for Change

From this critical perspective, the case for eliminating sports team names and logos that use Native American names becomes clear. Instead of pretending that the way we name the world is of no importance, we must acknowledge that those team names and images are part of a system that oppresses Native Americans. The best defense of *The Oregonian* policy is an explicitly political one.

We all face questions about naming. A general rule might be that people have a right to choose their own name. A simple example would be the change in terms for Black people; at some point, when opinion in the Black community suggests that African American is the preferred term, the culture should make the switch from *Black* as the generally accepted term, just as society moved from Negro to Black.

But the rule that people have a right to name themselves needs to take into account power, effects, and authenticity; not everyone has the right to claim any name. In the case of the Washington Redskins, a non-Indian group (the team) has exercised its power to use a derogatory name that likely has harmful effects in promoting racist stereotypes—a name to which the team has no authentic claim. The team is appropriating a racist term that has been used against an oppressed group. Control over that name should rest not with a corporation or an owner from the oppressor class, but with Native Americans. If a substantial portion of the Native American population condemns the team's use of that name, the team has an ethical and political responsibility to stop using it.

Media outlets are not exempt from this responsibility. In their claims to objectivity, journalists often suggest that they must let people name them-

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selves and use the official name a group gives itself. Again, that rule holds generally, but questions of power, effects, and authenticity must be considered. Hiding behind professional conventions does not erase the ethical and political questions involved. It is useful to look at the journalists' commentaries to elaborate on this position.

First, the debate over this issue often focuses on the question of offensiveness. At the heart of the "PC defense" (the idea that people are becoming too sensitive to unimportant slights, so any charges involving offensive speech can be dismissed as trivial) is the assertion that racist, sexist, or homophobic language is merely offensive, that its most serious problem is that it annoys some people. While common politeness is a virtue, our main concern should not be about offensiveness. We live in a pluralistic society, and it is inevitable that in the clash of cultures, some people will be offended by others.

However, serious ethical and political issues are raised when issues are not only offensive, but oppressive—tied to systems of power in which certain people or groups keep other people subordinated. It should be without debate that Native Americans are an oppressed group, subject to historical and current practices by the dominant culture that have harmful material, psychological, and spiritual effects (Jaimes, 1992). One of the ways in which this oppression is maintained is the cultivation of certain stereotypes about Native Americans, as discussed earlier. Terms such as Redskin are part of the construction and maintenance of those stereotypes. Less overtly racist terms, such as Indians, are problematic when used by non-Native American groups and combined with stereotypical images and fan practices.

A second defense often made by journalists is that the news media often report on unpleasant and ugly aspects of our society, such as the hateful activities of Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan. To stop examining these kinds of events and issues in the press, this argument goes, would hinder people's understanding of the political world and actually slow change by ignoring racism. That contention ignores two key differences. First, contemporary reporting almost always includes material that highlights the deviance of such hate groups. (Deviance is used cautiously here, because of the way in which framing such groups as deviant distracts people from the less overt forms of racism in the culture.) Second, there is a difference between reporting on a racist group and the routine use of a racist team name that goes unchallenged day after day on the sports pages. The reporting about hate groups calls attention to the problem; the use of racist names reinforces the racism inherent in the name. Several journalists suggested that media outlets continue to use the team names but report on the controversy. Yet publications and broadcast stations realistically could not raise the criticisms each time the team name is mentioned. An occasional story about objections to Redskins would not counter the constant, unchallenged use of the name in day-to-day coverage.

Other Questions to Address

These two points make a clear case for banning such team names from use by a newspaper or broadcast station. Several less central questions,

however, need to be addressed. The first two concern the general issue of team names, and the third focuses on media.

First: Who decides which names are objectionable? Native Americans are not a monolithic group with one opinion. Indeed, a common complaint of native peoples is that Euro-Americans ignore differences between Native American nations and treat all Native Americans as if they had a common cultural heritage. Clearly, not all Native Americans find the team names problematic, but there need not be a magic percentage of Native Americans who agree on a position before non-Native Americans should take notice. It is clear that a large number of Native Americans object to these team names and logos. While no national survey data exists, the public positions taken by a variety of Native American groups suggest that there is a consensus among native peoples. Although some Native Americans have stated that they find the issue unimportant, few, if any, argue that team names such as Redskins are a source of pride for them. So, in the absence of a strong argument from Native Americans for using the names, these teams should stop using the names. This does not mean that members of the dominant group (Euro-Americans) should unilaterally make decisions about each nickname or image. Control over decisions about naming should be guided by Native Americans—the people who have the most at stake and the most reliable evaluation of the harm involved. There have been, and no doubt will be, cases in which Native Americans strongly support such names for schools that have a large Native American population, but that exception does not undermine this position.

Second: What are the competing interests? The interests of fans and team owners are relevant to, though not controlling over, this ethical and political decision. The former have a stake in the enjoyment of a spectator sport, the latter in whatever enjoyment or self-fulfillment they get from their teams and in profits. In neither case are those interests significant enough to counter the goal of combating oppression. Even for the most nostalgic fan or owner, changing a team name or logo is not a serious harm, and owners do not argue that it will reduce income.

Third: What are the costs, both financial and professional, to the media outlet? To ask writers to avoid a few team names requires nothing more than sending a memo to staff members and monitoring employee compliance. There is no financial burden in the execution of the policy, and the only potential cost would be in lost subscription income if angry readers canceled or lost advertising income if angry advertisers dropped their ads. But even if the decision resulted in lost income, the burden would have to be substantial before justifying the status quo. The other argument against change is that it puts media outlets in a position of being overtly political, which hurts their claim to be a neutral news source, on which their acceptance by readers is said to rest. But as previously argued, the conventions of objectivity are little more than veneer on a news-gathering and reporting process that is inherently political, and acknowledging the politics of news may be in the best interest of journalists. More flippantly, it could be argued that if journalists are the only people left who believe they are objective, the only damage to their reputations would be in their own eyes.

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Conclusion

One way to dismiss the entire question of team names is to point out that far greater problems face Native Americans: land rights, economic survival, health risks. Clearly, whether a few teams use derogatory names and symbols is not the only, or most important, item on the agenda of Native Americans. But when the costs of change are so small, there is no credible reason not to change, even if that change is not the single most important issue concerning Native Americans.

Many Native Americans who are active in these many struggles also speak out against the team nicknames. In a critique of sports practices, scholar and Indian rights activist Churchill (1993) asked Americans to understand that the treatment of Native Americans in popular culture is not "amusing" or just "good, clean fun": "Know that it causes real pain and real suffering to real people. Know that it threatens our very survival. And know that this is just as much a crime against humanity as anything the Nazis ever did" (p. 47).

The potential of this issue to expand non-Native American understanding of racism and spur change in other areas also should not be overlooked. As Vernon Bellecourt, an Indian activist and leader of National Coalition Against Racism in Sports and the Media, has told a newspaper columnist, "It's a safe subject. It' something your readers understand. We know that. The trick for us is that once we get the media's attention we need to be able to shift it to other problems, too" (Grow, 1992). Using language in a less oppressive manner does not by itself create a more just world. But it is part of the process, a vehicle for raising consciousness, engaging the moral imagination, and educating people.

Note

1. It is important for me to discuss my racial/ethnic identity and the issues it raises about my conclusions. I am a White descendent of northern Europeans who was raised in the Upper Midwest in areas taken from a number of Native American nations, including the Lakota, Assiniboine-Sioux, and Ojibwe. For most of my youth, I was socialized to accept the anti-Native American racism prevalent in that region. I speak here not as the voice of Native Americans on this issue, but as a White person attempting to responsibly engage in anti-racist scholarship and practice.

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What "Indians" Mean in the Media: Race, Language, and the Popular Imagination

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Abstract

This paper describes a set of ideas about American "Indians" and locates the origins of these ideas in Western language, epistemology and culture. Using the writings of Columbus, Thomas Jefferson, Horace Greeley as well as recent news stories, the paper illustrates how Native Americans were defined first as different and then as unworthy. The paper argues that this identity is so deeply embedded in American discourse today that it perpetuates "Indian" stereotypes and prevents a full understanding of contemporary native life.

What "Indians" Mean in the Media: Race, Language, and the Popular Imagination

Introduction: When the New York Giants football team prepared to take on the San Francisco 49ers in 1993, a *New York Times* headline said: "Westward Ho! Giants Circle the Wagons." The *Times* also used "circle the wagons" in several other recent headlines, including the Afrikaner resistance to multi-racial democracy in South Africa and a dispute between Hollywood executives and Attorney General Janet Reno. Given such uses, it seems clear that "circle the wagons" is a widely understood phrase in contemporary American discourse. It means, roughly, to "sit tight" or "hunker down" in preparation for an attack. The phrase originates from the experience of western emigration, where wagon trains would form a circle to defend themselves from attacks by Indians. But the continuing and popular use of this phrase raises a number of questions about the racial uses of language and the media's indifference to such meanings. Indeed, Native Americans have cited this phrase and others—"smoke the peace pipe," "off the reservation," and "the cavalry is coming"—as evidence of the continuing misrepresentation of Native Americans in the media. The regularity of such usages, they complain, "illustrates how media manage to vilify or categorize an entire group of people without that group of people even being a part of the story" (Center for the Integration and Improvement of Journalism, 1994, p. 49).

This essay argues that such phrases are sign of a familiar but fundamental misrepresentation of Native Americans and their cultures. Native people are not merely misunderstood by the media; indeed, it is more accurate to say that they are understood all too well. That is, Native Americans are represented by the media in language and images so narrow and so dependent on deeply rooted social understandings and cultural myths that most members of the dominant society

know exactly what is meant by "Indians" in American culture. "Indian stories," "Indian language" and "Indian looks" are so common and so popular that their public meanings are virtually predetermined: all Americans seem to "know" that Pocahontas was a beautiful Indian princess, that Squanto was kind to the Pilgrims, that Geronimo was a cunning warrior, and on and on—whether or not the facts support such beliefs.

These ideas are neither trivial nor harmless. In fact, they obscure a whole range of Indian identities and characterizations—the complex relations and myriad details that make up an accurate description of a people and their culture. By relying on a small number of standard ideas and stories about Native Americans, popular culture and mass media have consistently and repeatedly reduced Native Americans and their cultures to cardboard cutouts, easily understood and even more easily dismissed.

In this essay, I explore the origins of "Indian" ideas as they are played out in media discourse and popular culture. My primary goal is to describe the ways that race and racial differences have been constructed in language, knowledge and culture and to investigate how these differences have formed a powerful popular identity for Native Americans. By analyzing the relationships between language, race, and difference in popular understandings of Native Americans, I hope to reveal the ways native people have been "made to mean" in American life and to illuminate the links between these meanings and contemporary images of Native Americans.

Significantly, but not coincidentally, few media scholars have addressed these issues. African American identities have been explored by a number of historians (Fredrickson, 1971; Van Deburg, 1984; Saxton, 1990) and recent cultural critics have developed a growing body of theoretical work on race and identity, most of it relating to African Americans (Omi & Winant, 1986; Gates, 1986a & 1986b; Todorov,

1986). Native Americans have been overlooked these analyses, despite a rich body of historical work on Native American-European American relations. In this essay, I build upon recent theoretical work to develop a more illuminating explanation for the cultural origins of the "Indian" identity and its enduring popularity in American media.

I begin with a brief analysis of the racial ideology of language and Western epistemology. I then examine the social and cultural construction of racial identities and the ideological consequences of these racial formations. Finally, I take up the problem of "Indian" racial representations in news and popular culture, symbolic forms with their own peculiar qualities.

Race, Language and Power: It is important, first, to address the meanings suggested by the word "race" and the continuing confusions over racial categories. What exactly does "race" mean and how has this meaning been achieved? Is race an indicator of genetic or "blood" differences? Is race a cultural distinction? Or is race simply a matter of skin color? If so, how and why have skin color distinctions been made? As these questions suggest, the concept of "race" has changed over time. Banton (1987) has documented the shift from theological and biological explanations of race (race as lineage) to sociological explanations (race as status and class). Other scholars have attacked "race" as a convenient but artificial distinction born of imperialism, ingrained in unjust social systems and perpetuated today in language and public discourse. Gates (1986a), for example, citing the confused history of racial ideas, argues that "race" as a biological fact does not exist. Indeed, Gates argues that "race" is less about biology than skin color. Thus Gates contends that racial distinctions are nothing more than arbitrary and socially constructed differences which are—and always have been—spurious. Todorov (1986) makes a similar point, noting that skin color is not the only way to categorize human beings. "[W]e obtain completely divergent subdivisions of the human species according to

whether we base our description of the 'races' on an analysis of their epiderms or their blood types, their genetic heritages or their bone structures" (pp. 370-71). Other critics (Hall, 1991; Dennis, 1994; Wright, 1994) have pointed out that even skin color designations are arbitrary. People from the Indian subcontinent, for example, are Caucasians and have been counted in the U.S. census as white, whatever the tone of their skin.

For Gates and other critics, skin color has been made to mean something much more powerful than mere differences in pigmentation. Gates writes that race "pretends to be an objective term of classification...when in fact it is a dangerous trope" (1986a, p. 5). Further, Gates points out that the history of this trope includes the many attempts to attribute racial differences to God, science, the natural order, as well as supposedly unbiased descriptions of cultural tendencies. In short, popular concepts of race and racial difference have not been (and cannot be) adequately supported by differences in biology or physical appearance. There are, of course, real and significant differences between groups of people, but these differences have less to do with "race" than with different cultural practices and traditions. Race, Gates concludes, is "a metaphor for something else and not an essence or a thing in itself, apart from its creation by an act of language" (1986b, p. 402) For Gates, racial differences are both described by and inscribed in language. Thus I argue, with Gates, that race exists in language and ideology more than in actual, physical fact.

This view of race raises important questions about the role of popular culture and mass media in the creation and maintenance of racial ideologies, questions that expose racial assumptions and inequalities. Stuart Hall (1991) has illustrated the power of such assumptions by noting that "black" is a term laden with social and political significance. For Hall, a Jamaican of African descent living in Britain, the term "black" invokes a "signifying chain" of meanings which involve particular words—in his own case, "coloured," "West-Indian," "Negro," "black,"

"immigrant"—as well as the "ideologies of identity, place, ethnicity, and social formation" (p. 106). Moreover, these words and the racial ideologies that sustain them are deeply embedded in the social fabric; they operate "in discursive chains, in clusters, in semantic fields, in discursive formations" (p. 102). In short, the words and popular understandings of race and racial identity are not neutral, but creations of a complex system of differences and social inequalities.

For Native Americans, a similar "signifying chain" of meanings also exists. "Redskin," "red man," "savage," "heathen," "infidel," "brave," and "squaw" are all words that have particular histories in European and American discourse and, as Hall suggests, they represent something more than simple labels; they are invested with ideological power and they function as markers of the differences between whites and Native Americans. For words describing skin color, this is clearly the case, since skin color has been used in the U.S. and other Western countries as a marker of social status: "white" is the highest color, the most powerful and the most desirable. Darker shades of "black" and "brown," on the other hand, have been viewed as the lowest, the least desirable and the least powerful. Various shades of "tan," "yellow," "red," "olive," and the like are ranked somewhere in the middle. In general, then, the lighter one's the skin color, the greater one's opportunities for social and economic advancement. Conversely, the darker one's skin, the more difficult it has been to gain status or wealth.

Seen in this light, "redskin," a term once widely used to designate Native Americans, signifies something more than mere description; it marks a position in the social hierarchy. Thus even the most neutral or naive use of the term "redskin," "red man," or similar words cannot help but mark its object as non-white, as different from the dominant society, as—ultimately— inferior. This is also true, though in a less obvious way, for words often identified with Native Americans—"savage," "brave" and "squaw," for example.

An historical news example illustrates the "signifying chain" of meanings surrounding the meaning of "Indian." When Sitting Bull was killed in 1890, the New York *Times* invoked skin color and savagery to signal the status of his race. Sitting Bull was "distinguished," the *Times* said ironically, for his "impracticality and apparent motivelessness." He should have been a "comfortable old savage" eating his government rations, the *Times* noted, "for it is inconceivable that the red man should reject anything edible on the score of its quality." Though "the old reprobate" was unwilling to be a Messiah to his people, "he was as well aware as any copper-colored inhabitant of the country of the political value of a Messiah...." (December 16, 1890, p. 4.) In the abstract, "red man" and "copper-colored" are not negative terms. But in the context of this editorial, these terms are racial markers linked to several obviously negative words: "impracticality," motivelessness," "savage," and "reprobate." The logic of this discourse is to connect the idea of race with skin color and social worth so that "copper-colored savages" such as Sitting Bull are identified as different from—and inferior to—whites.

In sum, Native Americans have a powerful racial identity rooted in language and in the control of that language. Indeed, the argument here is that language itself is not—and cannot—be neutral or objective. As Said (1986) has argued, someone or some group always exercises power over words, terms, descriptions and, most importantly, meanings. Thus the meanings preferred by some individuals or groups take precedence over the meanings preferred by other individuals or groups. This inequality leads to the use of language as an instrument of domination and difference, especially when the language and symbols interact with other political, social and economic forces within the dominant society.

Discovery, Epistemology and Inequality: European explorers in the Americas saw themselves as agents of civilization, bringing imperial power and Christianity (among other things) to an unorganized and heathen land. Not surprisingly, this

relationship had a host of consequences, not the least of which involved the origin, character and status of Native Americans. Faced with an entire hemisphere of new lands and new people to understand and explain, European explorers were forced to revise their theories about the world. It was largely an epistemological problem. "Having discovered America, [Europe] now needed to make a place for the New World within its intellectual and verbal universe," Wayne Franklin has noted (1979, p. 7).

One thing never in doubt, however, was European superiority. Europeans represented civilization and they controlled both the language of discovery and the organization of knowledge about the New World. Thus Indians became, in Eric Wolf's (1982) useful phrase, "people without history." Such people, as Said (1986) has noted, were created as products of western historicism. For non-European societies, Said writes, historicism has supported the idea that "the one human history uniting humanity either culminated in or was observed from the vantage point of Europe, or the west" (p. 223). For North and South America, Africa, and other parts of the world, history began only when the Europeans arrived. "What was neither observed by Europe nor documented by it was, therefore, 'lost' until, at some later date, it too could be incorporated by the new sciences of anthropology, political economics and linguistics" (p. 223). Said's point is that the very epistemological foundations of western knowledge are structured in ways which diminish the power and significance of the non-European world. This has had the effect of privileging the European world in its relations with all its others and has helped perpetuate the myth of European superiority.

Like African-Americans and other people of color, Native Americans were imagined and symbolically created by the discourse of discovery and conquest. In his study of early travel writing from the New World, Franklin (1979) argues that the

European use of language offered a powerful and comfortable way of explaining America:

> More than any other emblem of identity, language seemed capable of domesticating the strangeness of America. It could do so both by the spreading of Old World names over New World places, people, and objects, and by the less literal act of domestication which the telling of an American tale involved. Moreover, it could provide voyagers just departing for America with a set of articulated goals and designs by which the course of Western events actually might be organized beforehand. This ability to "plot" New World experiences in advance was, in fact, the single most important attribute of European language. Like the expectations about what a New World report ought to contain (or omit), it entailed a faith in the almost magical power of words which was part of the larger European assumption about the immutable correctness of Old World culture (p. 5).

Building on Franklin, my argument is that America generally and Native Americans specifically were imagined and "created" from a language of discovery and imperial power that made a full and just account of Native Americans difficult if not impossible.

Some examples illustrate this point. Early Spanish explorers looked at the New World "through medieval spectacles" (Hanke, 1959, p. 3), an outlook that emphasized the fantastic. Europeans had imagined a world inhabited by "giants, pygmies, dragons, griffins, white-haired boys, bearded ladies, human beings adorned with tails, headless creatures with eyes in their stomachs or breasts, and other fabulous folks" (Hanke, p. 3). Prepared for such marvels, explorers saw Native Americans not as fellow humans beings but as strange and exotic creatures whose values and customs were bizarre or, even worse, heathen.

English patent letters characterized the New World and its inhabitants in similar terms. Gilbert's patent of 1578, for instance, described the land as "remote, barbarous, and heathen" (quoted in Seed, 1993, p. 113). Native people were frequently omitted from these letters altogether. When they were mentioned, they

were often separated from the English in specifically religious terms; the English were Christians, of course, but the Indians were "infidels" and "pagans." (Seed, p. 115).

Columbus himself emphasized similar themes. The first mention of native people in his *Diario* was a reference to their nakedness (1530/1989, p. 63). The *Diario* also shows that Columbus, an explorer and voyager on a Royal mission, positioned Indians not just as different from Europeans but also as natural subjects of Spanish power and religion. Columbus gave the first natives he met red caps and glass beads "because I recognized that they were people who would be better freed [from error] and converted to our Holy Faith by love than by force..."(p. 65). The natives are friendly, Columbus wrote, "and gave of what they had very willingly." Yet he could not write about the islanders without making comparisons between native and European ways. The natives "seemed to me...a people very poor in everything," he wrote (p. 65). As evidence, he cited their lack of iron weapons. "They do not carry arms nor are they acquainted with them, because I showed them swords and they took them by the edge and through ignorance cut themselves" (p. 67). Columbus recognized the intelligence of the natives, but he mentioned intelligence a part of his evaluation of their potential as servants. (pp. 67-68) Finally, it is important that Columbus described the natives in terms of their skin color. "[T]hey are the color of the Canarians," he writes, comparing them to the islanders of the Atlantic, "neither black nor white..." (p. 67). These initial impressions, collected on the first day of Columbus's encounter with the natives, illustrate how easily the acts and language of discovery identified Native Americans as separate and inferior peoples. Cultural comparisons were inevitable, of course, but the effect of the discourse—discussed in Europe for decades after 1492—was to amplify racial divisions and position Native Americans as barbaric, heathen, uneducated, and uncivilized.

Even Columbus's name for the natives had epistemological consequences. As Berkhofer has pointed out, by calling indigenous Americans "Indians," Columbus erroneously linked them to a known but exotic place and culture, reinforcing the differences between native and Europeans and emphasizing the "strangeness" of Native Americans. Wolf (1982) also argues that "Indian" as a racial designation is the outcome of European economic subjugation. "The term Indian stands for the conquered populations of the New World, in disregard of any cultural or physical differences among native Americans" (p. 380). With Berkhofer, Wolf notes that the European designation of Native Americans as "Indians" denied the natives "any constituent group political, economic, or ideological identity of [their] own" (p. 380). In sum, the language used to categorize the natives of the New World had important social, economic and political consequences, one of which was to produce and sustain an ideology of exaggerated racial differences and Native American inferiority. Moreover, the single term "Indian" was used to collapse an enormous variety of indigenous American cultures and societies into a single, oversimplified category. Thus "Indians" came be seen by Europeans and Americans as a single group of people when in fact they were quite unlike each other in a variety of ways and never considered themselves to be a cultural or social unit. In short, the word "Indian" describes a category of people both defined and united by their differences from Europeans.

The presumed origin of Native Americans also worked against a full understanding of native life. In the decades after 1492, Berkhofer has noted, some European scholars attempted to explain Native Americans according to Christian cosmology, an explanation which held that all humans were related. But if so, why were Indians so different from Europeans?

> How came these previously unknown peoples to be in the Americas, given the story told in Genesis of Adam and Eve first peopling the Earth after their

> expulsion from the Garden of Eden and a repeopling of the planet from the children of Noah after the Flood? If Native Americans were unknown to Biblical and classical authorities, were they part of the human race at all? If so, from what branch had they sprung? (Berkhofer, p. 35)

Following this logic, Indians were thought to be the degenerate descendants of ancient Greeks, Scythians, Tartars, or Spaniards. A popular theory, Berkhofer notes, linked Indians to one of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Such theories fostered a self-serving view of Indians as degenerates of a once-great people, a view that influenced a host of later ideas—"doctrines of environmentalism, progress, evolutionism, and racism" (p. 38)—as ways to categorize, stigmatize, and disfranchise Native Americans. All this suggests that the European concept of race had less to do with biology than with real and imagined "racial" differences. With no concept of cultural pluralism, Europeans and early Americans could plainly see that native ways were different from—and inferior to—white ways. But what accounted for the native inferiority? The most powerful and all-consuming answer was deceptively simple: "race." Native cultures were inferior to European cultures because native people were naturally inferior to whites.

One consequence of such ideas was the division of humankind into moral categories: some "races" and colors (such as "white" Europeans) were morally superior to other "races" and colors (such as "black" Africans and "red" Americans). Berkhofer has pointed out that Europeans linked the moral qualities of a group to their physical characteristics and divided people into higher and lower categories according to these physical differences (p. 55). This was probably an inevitable human response, but it served to widen and exaggerate presumed racial differences and it helped to justify the European domination of "inferior" peoples.

Indeed, it is my argument that this meaning-making process remains central to contemporary conceptions of Native Americans and their cultures. Further, I

maintain that this process helps account for the continuing popularity of the "Indian" over the past five hundred years.

Civil Society and the Indian: The creation of the Indian identity did not end with the language of imperial exploration. American ideas about democratic society also helped define the Native Americans in particular ways. As with earlier discourse, Native Americans were identified in American society as people beyond the norms of American social and civic life. And again, this separation had important consequences. Alexander (1992) has argued persuasively that American civil society has important moral dimensions. That is, American society includes a host of fundamental assumptions about how the society is to be organized; in Alexander's words, "a realm of structured, socially established consciousness, a network of understandings..." (p. 290). These understandings, in turn, make up "distinctive symbolic codes that are critically important in constituting the very sense of society for those who are within and without it (p. 290). Further, these symbolic codes constitute categories of civil membership; that is, they allow the society to distinguish good citizens from bad. Alexander writes, in fact, that "there is no civil discourse that does not conceptualize the world into those who deserve inclusion and those who do not" (p. 291).

Alexander's framework illustrates how Native Americans and other minority groups came to be defined as politically and socially "outside" and inferior. American democratic discourse is based on European ideas and "white" Americans naturally located themselves inside this discourse. It was, after all, a vocabulary and an ideology that reflected their values of political behavior and civic virtue: "republicanism and Protestantism, Enlightenment and liberal thought, of the revolutionary and common law traditions" (Alexander, p. 291). The assumptions and expectations implied by these terms constitute a boundary between democratic and "counterdemocratic" qualities. Accordingly, democracy requires rationality, self-

control, conscience, deliberation, a sense of equality, and so on. Counterdemocratic qualities include irrationality, passion, greed, conspiracy, hierarchy, and the like. People who are described by the latter terms, Alexander notes, are seen by "real" or mainstream Americans as "being unworthy and amoral, as in some sense 'uncivilized'" (p. 291).

Although Alexander does not address Native Americans specifically, it is remarkable how well his analysis fits the native position in American culture. The counterdemocratic qualities on his list—dependent, irrational, mad, secret, deceitful, conspiratorial, factional, and the like—are often associated with most blatant racial stereotypes of Native Americans. No less than Thomas Jefferson understood the differences between "the Savage Americans" and European Americans in just such terms. Jefferson's examination of native life in Virginia led him to conclude that Indians were organized into "little societies" because "of their having never submitted themselves to any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government" (p. 220). Jefferson, heir to Enlightenment ideas about democracy and individual rights, overlooked or ignored native ways of governing, and his writing reinforced the differences between Virginia tribes and English settlers. The point is not to fault Jefferson but to illustrate the standards of civic virtue by which Jefferson and other Americans judged the native world. As this example suggests, such evaluations were often exaggerated or wrong. Nevertheless, these evaluations identified a host of cultural and political differences as racial differences, making them even more intractable than they might otherwise have been.

Editor Horace Greeley also characterized Native Americans in terms of their potential as citizens. In 1859, the popular founder of the *New York Tribune* decided to take his own advice and "go west." By the time he got to Denver, Greeley had encountered a number of native people and he quickly seized upon their faults. On the plains, Greeley had seen Indian men "sitting around the doors of their lodges at

the height of the planting season" (p. 152). This violated Greeley's ideas about work as well as God's plan for America: "These people must die out—there is no help for them. God has given this earth those who will subdue and cultivate it..." (p. 152). Indian men, Greeley decided, were "[s]qualid and conceited, proud and worthless, lazy and lousy" while Indian women were "[d]egraded and filthy" but, unlike the men, "neither too proud nor too indolent to labor" (p. 153). Although individual Indians could be shrewd, Greeley thought, most Indians were as simple as children. "Their arts, wars, treaties, alliances, habitations, crafts, properties, commerce, comforts, all belong to the very lowest and rudest ages of human existence" (p. 151). Notably, Greeley put his evaluation in civic terms: "Any band of schoolboys, from ten to fifteen years of age, are quite as capable of ruling their appetites, devising and upholding a public policy, constituting and conducting a state or community, as an average Indian tribe" (p. 151). To Greeley and most of his readers, Indians were clearly indolent and primitive, characteristics that put them outside the boundaries of the society and made them unsuitable candidates for citizenship. Moreover, Greeley's reports made the differences between the races was seem vast and immutable.

The common understandings of civic virtue and hard work were also used to undermine native land claims in the nineteenth century. John Quincy Adams, for example, attacked Indian claims in 1800 on the grounds that Indians were only hunters who "accidentally ranged" over it. "Shall the exuberant bosom of the common mother, amply adequate to the nourishment of millions, be claimed exclusively by a few hundreds of her offspring?" Adams asked (quoted in Gossett, 1963, p. 230). Valid claims required that Indians settle on the land and till the soil, Adams wrote—though he conveniently ignored the fact that many Eastern tribes lived in permanent villages and grew crops.

Impeaching native virtue became even more acute when the financial stakes were higher. In 1880, Colorado Congressman James B. Belford used laziness and sloth to deny mineral rights to native people. Belford concluded that

> an idle and thriftless race of savages cannot be permitted to guard the treasure vaults of the nation which hold our gold and silver, but that they shall always be open, to the end that the prospector and miner may enter in and by enriching himself enrich the nation and bless the world by the results of his toil (quoted in Gossett, 1963, p. 236).

Hard work and thriftiness were "white" characteristics, unattainable by degraded "savages." In other words, the nation's riches belong to its "proper" citizens, individuals who participate in the capitalist adventure and "enrich the nation." Inferior races need not apply.

In sum, Native Americans were defined as clearly outside the common understandings of the civic order—it was a western European system and Indians were obviously alien to it. The logic of this civic identification, however, was to define a host of skin colors and ethnic groups as unfit members of the democracy. Thus Native Americans, African slaves and black freedmen, Asian workers, Southern Europeans, and many others were marginalized both in discourse and in fact. In the case of Indians—people with "red" skins and "uncivilized" ways—there was little doubt about their moral and civic deficiencies, a fact that has been embedded in decades of American journalism and popular culture.

Media, Meanings and Indians: As Hall's "signifying chain" of meanings suggests and the discourse of discovery illustrates, humans use stereotypes and generalizations to understand other people and other groups. Indeed, it is probably impossible to think about and understand any group or category of people without some reliance on such generalizations. Nevertheless, the use of stereotypes and generalizations can be seen as racist, where racism is defined as "those social

practices which (explicitly or implicitly) attribute merits or allocate values to members of racially categorized groups solely because of their 'race'" (Omi & Winant, p. 145).

Some examples show how this process works today in popular discourse: young African-American males can jump high, Asian students are academically gifted, and Native Americans have a "sixth sense" in the wilderness. Whatever the truth of such generalizations, it is clearly not the case that all young African American males are good jumpers, that all Oriental students are gifted or that all Indians have extraordinary powers of sight, sound and smell. Nevertheless, these generalizations have power in the society because they are widely accepted as true, whatever their literal truth. The fact that such racial generalizations are well known is a major source of their power and it is my contention that American society relies on a host of unstated racial assumptions that "everybody knows." These assumptions, in turn, perpetuate racism at all levels of society, including popular culture and the media.

Van Dijk's (1993) work on race and media sheds some light on how such racial generalizations interact with mass media. Historically, he notes, news and other public accounts of native peoples were closer to storytelling than to formal news. In both cases, commonplace stories about racial and ethnic affairs presuppose the storyteller's knowledge and beliefs about those affairs. Moreover, van Dijk writes, "storytellers implement, enact, legitimate, or challenge group knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies and thereby contribute to the reproduction of ethnic prejudices..." (p. 122). Van Dijk's insights offer further support for the idea that racial attitudes are embedded in both personal and societal narratives and that these narratives function in ways that maintain the dominant social order and keep racial minorities in an inferior position.

Native American product and team names are one ordinary manifestation of this practice. The list is extensive: Jeep Cherokee, Ford Thunderbird, Pontiac, Kansas City Chiefs, Atlanta Braves, Washington Redskins, Chicago Blackhawks, Tomahawk missiles, Apache helicopters, Crazy Horse Malt Liquor and so on. As this list illustrates, a only small number of qualities associated with Native Americans are emphasized: Cherokees are tough, Pontiacs are powerful, Chiefs and Braves are fearless, Apaches are great warriors and so on. Such racial logic sustains and reinforces the popular understandings of "Indians" and "Indian" characteristics, suggesting qualities that do not fit most Native Americans or that emphasize vague glories of the past. Nevertheless, these generalizations persist as evidence of racial differences, distinctions that follow a "they-all-look-alike" type of reasoning. Such thinking reduces the diverse range of native people and cultures to a small number of mostly negative and easily identifiable characteristics.

With respect to mascot names, it is significant that the debate centers on almost exclusively on Native American names. No sports team today carries a team name considered offensive to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Jews, Catholics, or Protestants. But the Redskins, Braves, Chiefs, Blackhawks, and Indians continue to play football, baseball, hockey and other sports. This would seem to be direct evidence for the continuing power of the Indian stereotype in American culture. As suggested by the language and logic of discovery, Native Americans and their cultures are uniquely available for appropriation and use in ways that other people or cultures are not. Racial ideology is so embedded in popular thinking about Native Americans that team owners, players, fans, sports writers, and most of the public see the mascot debate as a trivial issue or another example of "political correctness" gone awry.

The deeply embedded meaning of "Indians" is also evident in news representations of contemporary Native Americans. Four recent stories, three from

newspapers and one from a television news magazine, demonstrate that even balanced and "objective" contemporary reporting engages a set of common understandings and cultural assumptions about native people. While these examples are not statistically derived, I argue that they do illustrate the meaning-making process commonly used to make sense of "Indians" in contemporary media. The first story, published in Oklahoma City in 1992, reported a federal judge's decision forbidding the state Corrections Department from cutting the hair of native inmates who wear long hair for religious reasons. While the decision was a victory for the inmates, the story cast doubt on the nature and value of native religious beliefs. The second paragraph of the story, for instance, named the three inmates and said they "professed to practice a religious faith in which the cutting of their hair would be a sin" (Godfrey, *Daily Oklahoman*, January 8, 1992, p. 15A). The story noted that the state had allowed long hair for "sincere" religious beliefs, but later revoked these exemptions as a threat to prison order and security. While the story balanced the state's interest in order against the judge's reasoning in overruling the state, it omitted any explanation of the inmates' beliefs, raising serious questions about the legitimacy of their ideas. What was this religion and why did it require long hair? What was the origin of such beliefs? What tribes follow this practice? Were these inmates members of those tribes? None of these questions was asked or answered in the story, omissions that undermined native religious claims and suggested its frivolous nature. Furthermore, the story's characterization of the inmates' beliefs—that they "professed to practice" this religion—hinted that these beliefs might be insincere. Based on the information available in the story, the native belief in long hair was either silly, groundless or simply convenient, a religious belief dredged up to create disorder and challenge prison authority. As in the past, this representation of "Indians" revealed them as cultural and civic

outsiders, people with odd, perhaps unexplainable (and decidedly non-Christian) religious beliefs who use them to make trouble in the larger society.

Another recent news story employed a series of clichés about native people. Dirk Johnson, a writer for the *New York Times* News Service, used the success of a Minnesota tribe to explain the effects of casino gambling on tribal life across the nation. The story opened with the contrast between the stark but glorious native past and the controversial but lucrative future. "On this rolling expanse of tall-grass prairie," Johnson began, "...tribal elders would remind children growing up in rickety trailers that life had not always been so stingy." But change was on the way. Writing from Prior Lake, Minnesota, Johnson continued:

> The elders [of the Shakopee Mdewekantan] spoke of a time when great herds of roaming buffalo thundered on the plains with a promise of abundance for American Indians.
>
> Today the thunder has returned. It is the unceasing sound of coins being poured into slot machines at the tribe's Mystic Lake casino here. (*Tulsa World*, August 17, 1994, p. 7E)

This is effective writing, using contrast and colorful details to create reader interest. But it is also a romantic invocation of the Mdewekantan past, a way of efficiently glossing over the complex history of a tribe few readers have ever heard of. This efficiency, in fact, is what makes this theme such effective journalism—it's exactly the story we expect from Indians on the plains: Once life was glorious, then the white man came. Not coincidentally, Johnson's romanticism can be found in dozens of historic "Indian" movies, from *Little Big Man* to *Dances With Wolves*. Missing from Johnson's romantic thesis, however, was a detailed and informed explanation of the natives on their own terms, before and after white men came.

The story also assumed a capitalist future for tribal success. Johnson mentioned the "burst of entrepreneurship" taking hold on many reservations. He noted the gaming windfall that has financed new roads, houses and schools in

Indian Country. He reported that the Southern Ute tribe had purchased a gas-drilling company, a way of seeking more economic self-determination for the tribe. This reporting was nominally fair and "objective." But story's assumptions were entirely utilitarian and capitalistic; the tribes were presented here as moving naturally and inevitably toward the accumulation of wealth, economic independence, and development of infrastructure. This model apparently applies to the tribes named in the story, but other ways of native growth and development were not suggested here. In other words, the natives who follow the dominant culture could be explained and commended in the media. Tribes less capitalistic—tribes with traditional ways of development and different models of success—got no endorsement here.

Another recent story, aired on ABC's *20/20* on August 13, 1993, concerned the efforts of the Golden Hill Paugussett tribe to obtain land for a casino in Connecticut, an action that threatened the property rights of thousands of homeowners. The story was dramatic and emotional, a "natural" topic for a prime-time news magazine. Reporter John Stossel began by recounting the financial hardships of several residents as a result of the tribal claim. Homeowner Dan Nyzio of Trumbull, Connecticut, complained, "How would you feel if somebody shoved this [summons] in your hand and your property is threatened.... They want my property that I worked hard for all my life."

The story described the historical background of the dispute and laid out the issues on both sides. Despite the superficial balance of the story, the Paugussetts were positioned as threats to the social and economic order. As homeowner Nyzio noted, he worked hard for his home and property, a statement that implies that the Indians did not. This is explicit later in the story, when Stossel notes that the Paugussett chief has arranged a $500,000 HUD grant for housing assistance. The story then turns to homeowner Bob Daloia: "That's another gift. Their philosophy is to jump on the

bandwagon." Nyzio again: "I worked hard for everything I have, just like 99 percent of the people in this country. The other one percent are a bunch of freeloaders, like these guys. They're looking for free stuff." Like Horace Greeley, these Connecticut homeowners champion hard work, a virtue apparently missing in these native people, "the other one percent." The logic of such reasoning is fundamentally racist: these people—Indians—aren't like us; they're lazy and they want government handouts. "This is greed," a Trumbull selectman said at another point in the report.

Other "Indian" meanings surface as well. In fact, the whole concept of Indian identity is questioned in this story. One of the Paugussett leaders, Stossel notes, was "known for years to people around Trumbull as Ricky Piper." But Ricky changed and "now calls himself Chief Quiet Hawk...." So is he a real Indian? The people of Trumbull don't think so, as this excerpt reveals:

Homeowner Carol Moreau: "This is still a so-called chief, this is not, as far as we're concerned, an Indian, a genuine Indian."

Stossel: "You don't think he's a genuine Native American?"

Moreau: "Well, he may have some Indian blood."

The story then moves to Stossel's interview with Piper/Quiet Hawk. Stossel: "And you're an Indian."

Piper/Quiet Hawk: "I am an Indian."

Stossel: "And how much of you is Indian?"

Piper/Quiet Hawk: "Well, my father's a full-blooded Indian and my mother was black." Stossel then acknowledges that makes him legal Indian. But this claim is again challenged by residents of Trumbull, and then by Stossel, acting out his role as the skeptical reporter.

Nyzio: "There was no Big Eagle, no Small Eagle, no Moonface, no nothing just Ricky and Kenny, just like anybody else."

Moreau: "They're a family. That's all we know them as."

Stossel: "They say you're not really a serious Indian. You're Ricky Piper. They've known you all your life. It's only when you could make money that you became Chief Quiet Hawk."

Piper/Quiet Hawk: "Well, unfortunately, they—they would be wrong."

These exchanges illustrate the continuing effort of the dominant culture to define Indians without regard to native ideas or definitions. Despite the chief's undisputed legal status and the blood quantum that Stossel acknowledges, the residents refuse to accept his identity, a position the story tacitly supports. The Trumbull homeowners didn't know the Piper family to be an Indian family, so they must not be Indian, no matter what their heredity, legal status or current claim. By raising questions about native identity, the story reasserts the right of the dominant culture—in this case, the hard-working homeowners of Trumbull—to define who and what counts as "Indian." And the story clearly suggests that these "new" Indians are using their identity for private financial gain.

This disputed identity leads to such curious phrases as "genuine Indian" and "serious Indian," as if genuineness and seriousness were "racial" qualities. Moreover, neither Stossel nor anyone else in the story explains what degree of "Indianness" it would take for the Piper family to be considered "genuine" Indians. Is their "race" a matter of what they tell their neighbors? Is it what they tell themselves privately? Or is it a matter of skin color? If skin color counts, that ought to help Ricky Piper/Quiet Hawk, a man who appears to have relatively dark skin—though no one in the "20/20" story offers this as evidence of his identity. Such questions highlight the unstable definition of "race" as well as the way "racial" ideas are used in the media to delegitimize native identities and protect the status quo.

A 1994 Gannett News Service story about land claims in New York state reveals several similar uses of "Indian" meanings. The story, by reporter Carl Weiser, explains the conflict between white landowners in the Eastern U.S. and new

claims made by Native Americans. While the story is balanced in its use of sources and opinions, it nonetheless frames the issue in ways which undermine the native view. Consider this dramatic lead:

> WASHINGTON — The 17,500 residents of Grand Island, N.Y., got one big eviction notice last August.
>
> The Seneca Nation of Indians filed a federal lawsuit seeking the return of its colonial-era tribal lands, including Grand Island, and demanding the ouster of residents. (August 21, 1994)

This makes interesting copy. But is it an accurate summary of the conflict? The story itself provides some clues. The third paragraph, for example, refers to the Grand Island real estate market being "temporarily paralyzed," language that suggests that the "eviction notice" of the first paragraph was exaggerated. More importantly, the story puts the probable outcome of the case in paragraph 48 (out of 51). Paraphrasing a New York state legislator speaking about a similar claim from the Onieda tribe, the reporter writes: "No one is going to lose their land...." Instead, a monetary settlement is likely, the legislator points out.

Like the "20/20" story, this story emphasizes conflict—evicting people from their homes. But because this conflict represented a threat to the white majority, the eviction theme was emphasized beyond the facts of the story itself. More importantly, this story, like the "20/20" story, questioned the legitimacy of the native legal claims. The second paragraph, quoted above, labeled the land claim as "colonial-era," a term which can be seen as attacking its validity, suggesting that the claim is so old as to be worthless. Further down, the story cites the "historic wrongs" committed against the tribes, printing this term in quotes. Such punctuation tags this phrase as something less than true and opens the way to disputing these "wrongs" altogether. As a result, this story communicates something more than an objective and balanced review of native land claims in the East. By emphasizing the

threat to white landowners, questioning native legal claims, and underplaying actual grievances of native people, the story offers a good read but one that continues to treat Native Americans as deviant citizens, people who want to receive handouts at the expense of white Americans. One hundred thirty-five years after Greeley saw Indians sitting when he thought they should have been planting, reporter Weiser described the Senecas as more interested in suing over their colonial-era lands than in working "real" jobs. Then as now, a full understanding of native life proved illusive in the press.

Conclusion: The idea of the "Indian" in America is a complex cultural construct deeply rooted in language, Western epistemology and American civil discourse. It is my argument that these forces are so fundamental to "Indian" meanings in the media and popular culture that almost every public reference to Native Americans is understood in such terms. This was the case in 1990, for example, when Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* became a box office success portraying the Sioux in romantic terms. Although this was an openly sympathetic image of the Sioux, it was a marginal position, an exotic and colorful culture from which Costner, the movie's central character, could learn new truths about himself and his culture. The Sioux were "good Indians," but they were also outsiders, fated to recede before the sweep of American progress. This marginal position has long been popular in Hollywood, as Berkhofer has noted: "No matter how important the Indian might be to the Western plot and genre, he usually served in the end as the backdrop rather than the center of attention..." (p. 98).

A more flagrant native representation surfaced in 1994 when country singer Tim McGraw released a recording called "Indian Outlaw." The lyrics included these lines: "I'm an Indian outlaw/half Cherokee and Choctaw/my baby she's a Chippewa/she's one of a kind" and "You can find me in my wigwam/I'll be beating on my tom-tom/pull out the pipe and smoke you some/hey, pass it around." Such

language might be dismissed as silly and insignificant. But easy familiarity and continued popularity of the cartoon "Indian" demonstrates the incredible durability and cultural power of this symbol.

Native Americans suffer from a narrow definition, one that is deeply racist and inherently harmful. Current debates about mascots, product names, newspaper and movie images, and the like are so enmeshed in a web of cultural assumptions and common understandings that neither media producers or consumers are able to think beyond the usual explanatory categories. No matter how different individual Native Americans may be, no matter what their similarities and differences from each other or from European Americans, Native Americans cannot overcome the identity they have been assigned. What is necessary, then, are new ways of thinking about "race" and difference. New symbols, new terms and new understandings might, over time, help enlarge the image of Native Americans and allow them to transcend their position in American culture. Given the centuries of misrepresentation and the embedded nature of racial ideology, this will be no easy task.

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Exhibit 65
Book by Raymond Stedman:
<u>Shadows of the Indian</u>
Oklahoma Press (1982)

BLA-TTAB-02078

BLA-TTAB-02079

THE HOLLYWOOD INDIAN

BLA-TTAB-02080

THE HOLLYWOOD INDIAN

Stereotypes of Native Americans in Films

John E. O'Connor

Foreword by Lorraine E. Williams

Published by the New Jersey State Museum

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THE LANGUAGE OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND LEXICAL CULTURE

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Petitioners' Ex.

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INTRODUCTION

Let us hope that we will never grow so sanctimonious that we cannot listen to the mean things people say. They are our data.—Everett C. Hughes and Helen MacGill Hughes, from *Where Peoples Meet*, 1952, p. 132

Everyone knows that many terms of abuse for ethnic persons and groups have been used in the slang and other popular speech of American English. The existence and use of these words have been long and widely commented on, usually as evidence of prejudice and discrimination against minorities. Yet the substance of this vocabulary, as opposed to its spirit, has not been studied as a cultural response to an ethnically diverse society. Through the course of the nation's history, over a thousand names and hundreds of variants have been used for more than 50 different American groups. These words are abundantly recorded in scholarly records, particularly nineteenth- and twentieth-century dictionaries of Americanisms, but also in many other authoritative sources. The scholarly value of these terms is not self-evident. Their deservedly bad reputation has deflected attention from their usefulness as chronicles of social organization and change in American society.

In this study I use nounal epithets or generic nicknames for ethnic persons in American English as research data to address one of the oldest questions in sociology. How do objective demographic and ecological situations in communities generate culture and, in this case, a lexical culture? The vocabulary of ethnic abuse is a response to social diversity and it is elaborated by the effects of population size and density. While also a product of conflict in small towns and rural areas, as in the nineteenth-century South, name-making and name-calling proliferated in the close quarters and conflictful contacts of big-city life. The majority of the terms for European groups

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entered the language in response to the great immigrations and the churning effects of the industrial city, especially from about 1880 to 1930.

The language of ethnic conflict includes majority vocabularies of social control and minority vocabularies of resentment and protest. Nicknames for ethnic groups are clearly a vocabulary of instrument by which people and groups in communities express, reinforce, and redress rank orders along ethnic lines. The size, variety, and emotionality of this vocabulary is a "phenomenon," both in the sense of a universally observable event resulting from cultural contacts and in the other, popular sense of a spectacular and remarkable thing. Yet whole books are written on the stereotypes of national character, ethnic prejudice, and intergroup relations with little or no mention of the existence of the world of words spawned by those relations. Certainly, some think that ethnic slurs are too transparent in their meaning and not that important in and of themselves. But insofar as the grist for the sociological mill is the ordinary stuff of everyday life, then the vocabulary of ethnic conflict is singularly neglected.

Lexicographers, dialectologists, and, occasionally, folklorists have collected most of these American words and studied their uses and origins. I think first of H. L. Mencken and his early notes on terms of ethnic abuse in *The American Language*, beginning with the early editions. One of Mencken's great contributions was to emphasize the influence of immigrant groups on the words and ways of American English, by way of both the new words invented by them in response to their new settings and the new words coined by others to name the newcomers, always pejoratively. Mencken's arch attitudes toward ethnic minorities—and, for that matter, toward majorities—are well known; he could not resist using a few mild epithets even as he wrote with scholarship of others. His work on nicknames for ethnic groups has been carried forward to abundance by at least two generations of scholars, most of whom are cited in the chapters that follow. I would like to think that Mencken, wherever he is, would smile on further work on this sinful and homely vocabulary. My first task was merely to cull these many names from dictionaries and word lists of American slang and dialectal English and from many other scattered sources. Then there was the other matter of making sense of it all.

As a sociologist, I came to these lexical data by way of an interest in the cultures of urban communities or urbanism. These cultures include the

whole range of behavioral adaptations and cultural responses, including language, to the objective situations of life in cities, suburbs, and towns. Louis Wirth, summarizing in the late 1930s the teachings of the Chicago School of urban sociology, wrote that urbanism resulted from the direct effects of population size, density, and variety. These early sociologists believed that the effects of city life on the traditional community were at once disintegrative and assimilative and, generally, represented a devolution of social organization. Sociology is still struggling with the ambiguities of this legacy in such value-laden questions as the best balance between ethnic pluralism and assimilation in community life. The Wirthian hypothesis is now much modified and qualified, but there is still value in finding new ways to verify the effects of social organization on culture. The names that ethnic peoples have called one another are, I believe, useful data to corroborate and even to clarify what we know about the social processes of structure and change.

This vocabulary, I shall argue, arises from cultural contact, especially in cities, and is aggravated by inequality, perceptions of competition, and the forces of market society. As I collected these words, I saw patterns that signified more than just so much interpersonal and intergroup prejudice and stereotyping. The history of how, when, and where the words were coined affirmed my decision to leapfrog the usual interpretation, which stresses the present subjective uses of name-calling, and to ask after the sources of this vocabulary in the past objective situations that seemed to generate it most profusely. I soon realized that the broad outlines of historical and present relations among and within ethnic groups are revealed by the referents of these terms, the dates of their entry into American English, and the numbers of terms aimed at different groups. Minimally, I think this study will show that this vocabulary is larger, more varied and involving of all groups, and more a product of objective situations, than is often supposed.

Ethnic slurs and epithets are, of course, the symbolism of stereotyping and prejudice, and they are used ideologically to justify discrimination against minorities. The uses of this vocabulary as weapons—the hurling of epithets—is rightly regarded as a social problem and one that has deleterious consequences for its victims. For at least a half century, a good part of American sociology has been devoted to studying and often condemning

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this behavior. Paradoxically, not too much, yet little more, can be said about the inaccuracies of ethnic stereotypes, their insidiousness, and the evils that hatred and racist theories have released and continue to release.

Many of the slurs are genuinely offensive and will strike some persons of ethnic sensibility as obscene—an outrage to human dignity. They may feel that it is fulsome to recount every known term of abuse in the language, that it is enough to know of their lamentable existence. As these words are aggregated and organized in this study, they certainly seem a squalid litany. Many among ethnic minorities are smarting from great and recent injustices and some among the majorities are deeply sympathetic. There is a lot to be said for not mentioning rope in the house of a hanged man. These Americanisms are sometimes ugly words, but they are our words.

The reluctance of social scientists to deal extensively with abusive words for ethnic groups may stem, in part, from an ambivalence about the ancient issue of the balance of conflict and consensus in society and from the new issue of the false alternatives of ethnic pluralism or assimilation. To dwell on the symbols of divisiveness may to some intimate an untoward acceptance of divisiveness, for the popular ideology of pluralism stresses the harmoniousness of intergroup relations over their conflictfulness. Yet, sociologists now understand that conflict and consensus are complementary and that both will remain central to the workings of American society as long as we remain diverse and find personal identity in the particulars of diversity.

As I collected these words and studied their origins, semantics, and uses, I wondered whether they are better thought of as the cultural residue of a national tragedy or just the seriocomedic side of American life. Whatever their high meaning, they do give a retrospective, yet immediate and pungent, sense of the bitterness, pathos, and desperation of ethnic conflict. I was struck first by their viciousness and triteness and sometimes, finally, by their low comedy. Genteel philologists have relegated this vocabulary to the order of profanity, and its meaning in American life has been ignored. This vocabulary is too often read only as malice and too seldom as folklore with all the inventiveness, ideological utility, and inadvertent confession of other folklores. I hear in these words more than the din of billingsgate. They are, above all that, the echoes and re-echoes of historical situations, of issues wrangled over, and of the very incidents of contention.

This is a study in sociology, not in lexicography. I have not recorded a previously unrecorded word, antedated a word, or resolved a difficult etymology. My work, rather, has been to gather in the terms and to juxtapose them in ways that illuminate their social origins. In this light, the etymologies and semantics of the words are sometimes clarified. I hope, as a sociologist, that I have correctly interpreted these rich lexical data.

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CHAPTER 1 NICKNAMES FOR ETHNIC GROUPS

If we had a complete history of all the words which America has preserved, invented, or modified, we should possess the most revealing history conceivable of the American people.—Robert L. Ramsay, 1880–1953

Ordinary ethnic slurs, especially nicknames, are extraordinary chronicles of historical situations that produced and reproduced prejudice against groups and increased social distance from them. Over a thousand usually derogatory terms for more than 50 American groups have been accumulated in scholarly records of slang and of dialectal English. The accumulation of nicknames for a group reflects the quantity and quality of that group's past relations with other groups.

This is only seemingly contrary to the common sense that verbal abuse reflects only prejudice. Actually, it shows that both prejudice and verbal abuse heap in reaction to the history of a group's conflictful contacts with other groups. The social antecedents of these often offensive words corroborate the social conflict perspective on intergroup relations. These words also show something of the dynamism of ethnic diversity and document the strains of assimilation. In what seems a paradox, the stereotypes generated by the plural society underscore its great diversity.

An elementary fact about the relation of language to society is the twofold proposition that language reflects social organization and that language constrains social cognition of society (e.g., Hertzler 1965:34-37, 100-16; Fishman 1972:155-72; and others). The vocabulary of nicknames for ethnic people in American English is an inventory of outgroup stereotypes and so constrains the perception of people who use them; this has been the main interpretation of ethnic epithets. The related proposition that language mirrors social organization is of greatest interest here. Fishman (1972:166) writes, "In a very real sense a language variety is an inventory of the concerns and interests of those who employ it at any given time." The array of

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nicknames for an ethnic group that have been used in a language indicates how much and in what ways that group historically has concerned other speakers of the language. The historical inventory of these words is a remarkable example of the reflection of society in language.

The normative conventions of social science have discouraged the study of ethnic epithets, except as devices for stereotyping and as indexes of prejudice. Little more can be said about the moral offensiveness of these labels, their stereotypical inaccuracies, and their sometimes deleterious consequences for victims. Theory and research in the area of intergroup relations and their cultural artifacts have reflected—and to an extent still reflect—preoccupation with the normative concerns about prejudice and discrimination and with minority groups as victims (Schermerhorn 1970:6-9). Also, a psychologized perspective has dominated studies of the aggressive and abusive language of intergroup conflict, which sometimes seem to assume that ethnic stereotypes and derogatory names spring almost spontaneously from the malice of prejudiced people. The venerable and somewhat tautological observation that ethnic stereotypes, such as abusive nicknames, express ethnocentrism has almost precluded alternative analyses. But sociology also has an interest in exploring the objective situations in society that produce ethnocentrism.

This study has two interrelated aims. The first is to use the accumulation of ethnic nicknames in American English as new, historical data to evaluate the proposition that ethnocentrism and the variety of names for outgroups that express prejudice and stereotypes are serial consequences of specific political, economic, and especially demographic situations. Attitudes of bigotry and racism (and the vocabulary that has expressed them) appear as intervening variables between structural situations and acts of overt discrimination against victims. The symbolism, the stereotypes, and often the etymology of the names display the substance and tenor of intergroup struggles over resources, cultural influence, and status. In short, the vocabulary produced by past social situations can tell us about those situations and also about the tendency for similar situations to produce similar results in any historical period and, by implication, in any society. The second and related objective is to explain with a social or structural theorem the cultural phenomenon of this huge class of words. This excursion into lexical analysis occupies much of the study. Both objectives are equally important, for the

study explores society through language and language through society.

The pursuit of both goals requires a wrenching around of traditional thinking about the social meanings of abusive nicknames for ethnic groups. They are most fruitfully viewed as a kind of folklore of intergroup relations that rationalizes ideological beliefs about other groups and characterizes the relationships. The large size and the many targets of this vocabulary suggest an enormous and varied historical awareness of ethnic diversity in American life. Its size and variety also underscore the extent to which outgroup ethnicity and conflict have been nearly an obsessional undercurrent in American life and culture. Ethnicity, in fact, may be the largest single social theme in North American slang and popular speech. More than a thousand words and hundreds of variants denominate ethnic and quasi-ethnic entities and many others name the stations of ethnic change and emergence. Nicknames for American ethnic groups, cumulated historically, display not only the broad outline of our collective image of ethnic reality but also, remarkably, the detail and nuance of that image.

ETHNIC GROUPS

The names denominate members of more than 50 specific ethnic groups. Each group is an outgroup for name callers, who usually belong to some other ethnic group—their ingroup. An ethnic group can be succinctly defined as any racial, religious, language, national-origin, or regional category of subculturally distinct persons, regardless of the group's size (minority or majority), power (subordinate or dominant), or generational status (immigrant, native-born, or indigenous). Individuals may be members by birth, by personal identity, or by the ascription of society. Ethnically marginal persons may identify and be identified with two or more groups. By this definition, almost everyone is a member of some ethnic group. The only exceptions are ethnically nondescript persons, probably less than a tenth of the population, who have no ethnic identity, identities, or identifiableness, except as "American."

A popular but incomplete definition of a term of ethnic abuse is an appellation that members of the native-born white majority apply to members of a racial or immigrant minority. This stems in part from the euphemistic use of "ethnic group" as a low-income, oppressed, or recently arrived

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immigrant group. Hughes and Hughes (1952:137) pointed out this definitional error involving the semantic shift of the word *ethnic* to mean those groups who are not "charter members" of the community and who differ from the dominant majority and, lately, from whoever identifies with the majority. That is, this idea of ethnic group erroneously implies only minority status. This popular meaning has been rejuvenated and narrowed by the ideology and rhetoric of the recent white ethnic revival; only certain minorities are said to be "ethnics." (See Howard 1977:26-27, on the history of the word *ethnic*.)

Many people are not yet accustomed to thinking of ethnic majorities as just other ethnic groups. Actually, the white Protestant majority in the United States is not a single ethnic group but several quasi-ethnic entities. When individual white Protestants do not identify with a particular national origin, which surprisingly many do, they are often members of quasi-ethnic or subculturally distinct groups cut along regional, class, and denominational lines. White Southerners are the largest, most clearly defined of such groups, but there are others. For the same historical, situational reasons that other groups have been nicknamed, white Protestant groups have been nicknamed with a great variety of terms. Similarly, other large racial entities are not always of one ethnic group. Among blacks or Afro-Americans in the United States, there are many West Indians, Haitians, and other groups. Native American Indians and Eskimos are of many different ethnic groups. And the same is true of several national-origin groups.

NICKNAMES AND OTHER ETHNIC SLURS

The generic, common nouns of nicknames are but one form of interethnic verbal aggression, which is also expressed in language in a variety of other ways, such as in sayings, rhymes, songs, jokes, riddles, and other devices. There is no standard term that denotes all these expressions, except "ethnic slur." Some folklorists use the French *blason populaire*, which has no English equivalent. Roback (1944:251) coined the term *ethnophaulism*, from two Greek words meaning "a national group" and "to disparage," to refer to all types of ethnic slurs. All kinds of ethnic slurs in language originate in the same social processes and prejudices. Different kinds of slurs against particular groups are probably correlated in their incidence—a

group that is frequently slurred in one way is frequently slurred in all ways. My impression is that blacks, Jews, Irish, Italians, Mexicans, and Chinese, who will be seen to have the greatest variety of nicknames, are most variously abused by other devices as well.

A brief review of ethnic slurs other than nicknames will serve to set them apart at the outset. First, the proper names of groups have been changed into scores of derisive adjectives (Cray 1962, 1965; MacMullen 1963; Tamony 1965; Porter 1966, 1967; and Monteiro 1968). Second, ethnic derogation appears in metaphors, such as *Irish spoon* for a shovel, *Italian perfume* for garlic, *Dutch steak* for cheap hamburger, *Jewish flag* for a dollar bill, *Chinese B* for an unearned grade in college, *Mexican carwash* for leaving a car in the rain, and many others. Third, names have been converted to derisive verb forms, such as *to dutch*, *to french*, *to nigger* (also *to nigger-out*), *to out-yankee*, *to welsh*, *to gyp*, *to jew* (also *to iky*), *to jap*, and *to scotch* (e.g., Eisiminger 1979). Fourth, ethnic slurs appear as "ethnicons" (Algeo 1977), another kind of metaphor, such as *swede* for a blunderer, *turk* for a cruel, aggressive person, or for a sodomite, *arab* for a footloose person, *scotchman* for a miserly person, *welsher* for a reneger, *pole* for a dumb person, *indian* for a reckless person, *tartar* for an intractable person, *hessian* for a mercenary, *yankee* for a swindler, and others. Fifth, slurs appear as proverbs (Roback 1944) and taunting exchanges in children's rhymes and sayings (Opie and Opie 1959:345; Porter 1965). Finally, ethnic slurs appear in narrative forms, principally the ethnic joke.

The joke is the most prevalent form of folklore in modern society, and the ethnic joke is one of the most common types, especially the popular "numbskull" jokes and riddles (e.g., Simmons 1966; Welsch 1967; Dundes 1971). Ethnic jokes are often blank checks in which the names of various groups are substituted according to the prejudices of the moment and of the company. Abrahams (1980) argues that the faddish ethnic jokes have undergone a changed social significance in recent years. They are no longer really directed at, or meant to be exclusionary of, their nominal targets. Ethnic jokes, he says, depict cultural differences as eccentric rather than deviant and "operate on the principle of the acceptability of cultural pluralism."

Of the various kinds of ethnic slurs, nicknames for ethnic persons and groups are the most numerous, varied, history-laden, and recorded. They are also eminently countable.

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I have chosen to call these usually abusive and slurring nounal epithets simply nicknames, though to some it will seem too neutral a term for such censurable sentiments. *Epithet* is a good word meaning "to put a word upon" or "to call a name," especially a disparaging one. But in usage *epithet* includes a variety of devices other than names. *Nickname* denotes the particular device of nounal epithets, yet does not emphasize the linguistic process of pejoration, the social psychological process of stereotypy, or the social problems of prejudice and discrimination. The term *nickname* also distinguishes the illegitimate generic name for a group from the legitimate proper name.

The word *nickname* comes from Middle English *nekename* and means an appellative added to, or substitued for, the proper name for a person, often in ridicule, derogation, or just familiarity (Franklyn 1963:ix-xx). Before the thirteenth century, surnames were unknown, and nicknames were often added to help identify a person, like "Long" John, and this is still done in jest. Morris and Morris (1977:399) describe how the word *nickname* emerged. "These [tags] were first called *ekenames*—the *eke* meaning 'also or added.' Through a fairly routine linguistic change, 'an *ekename*' became 'a *nekename*' and eventually 'a *nickname*.'"

It is almost regrettable that Samuel Johnson was in error with his folk etymology that *nickname* is related to French *nom de nique*, roughly, "a name of contempt or derision," for it would agreeably suggest that nicknames of every kind are to some degree pejoratives. Francis Grose (1785:114) accepted Johnson's etymology and explained that "Nique is a movement of the head to mark contempt for any person or thing." Farmer (1889) said *nique* is an old cant word for "contemptuous indifference." Dr. Johnson's definition of *nickname* would be especially fitting for outgroup nicknames: "A name given in scoff or contempt; a term of derision; an opprobrious or contemptuous appellation."

Nicknames for ethnic persons and groups are a special case of nicknaming in general. A personal nickname, which is an informal proper name, denotes a category whose number is one, a personality. A different order of nickname is sometimes given to groups and aggregates whose number is greater than one, such as the many nicknames for residents of particular states. These are generic nicknames that are applied to any one or all persons of a group. An ethnic nickname, which is of this order, can be applied to

any one person of a group, such as calling a particular Mexican person a *spick*, or it can be applied to the whole group, referring to Mexicans in general as *spicks*.

Ethnic nicknames, because of their origins in cultural contact and often conflict, are usually but not always derogatory.

While *nicknames* may be the best single term we have for nounal epithets for ethnic persons and groups, I will in the following chapters also use near synonyms such as *slurs*, *epithets*, and other terms as the context suggests.

THE SOCIAL PROCESS OF NICKNAMING

Franklyn (1963:xiii-xiv) observes that personal nicknames, as they occur traditionally, are often references to personal appearances, physical characteristics, occupations, season of nativity, or incidents with which a person or his ancestors were connected. Nicknames for persons are substituted by other people for the proper name in response to social images of the nicknamed person. Similarly, nicknames for ethnic groups are substituted by other groups for the proper name in response to stereotypes of appearance, national character, putative behavior, and so on. Nicknames for persons or for groups are added, not at the beginning of their life, but later in the course of life histories in response to experience and situations. The society of children, it is often noted, is in many ways a microcosm of adult social worlds and nicknaming among children is an instructive parallel.

Morgan, O'Neill, and Harré (1979) studied the social significance, formation, and uses of personal nicknames among school children. The process parallels the formation and uses of nicknames among ethnic groups, for both are cases of the phenomenon of nicknaming, which in turn is a case of naming in general. The authors show that children's nicknames derive etymologically from *internal* and *external* formations. Internal formations are rhymes, contractions, verbal analogues, and suffix additions. Many nicknames for ethnic groups also are word plays, alterations of the proper name, and shortenings, and use diminutive suffixes. External formations of children's nicknames are recognition of personal qualities (either physical, intellectual, or of character), of famous or striking incidents in school life associated with an individual, or of cultural stereotypes associated with a child's name; they may also be nicknames associated with certain

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proper names. Nicknames for ethnic groups similarly derive greatly from physical traits, putative national character, or great events, such as wars, and draw inspiration from the cultural stereotypes of folklore and mass media.

Morgan, O'Neill, and Harré go on to analyze children's nicknames as having social uses in the school society. These are remarkably close to the uses served by nicknames for ethnic groups in larger arenas, such as the community and the nation. First, children's nicknames serve to create and maintain social class. "People" are segregated from "nonpeople"; privileged groups are set off and their privilege is acknowledged and reinforced; and scapegoats are created. Second, children's nicknames promulgate and enforce social norms by highlighting deviations from the norms of physical appearance and behavior and, in doing so, indicate what those norms are. Nicknaming works by stigmatizing deviant individuals and the deviant trait and by creating pressures to bring behavior into line with the norms. It works by forcing the person to deal with the stigma, which is sometimes by self-loathing. Peter Opie (1970:355), the folklorist of children's lore, wrote that the well-known doggerel on name-calling should be rephrased: "Sticks and stones just break my bones/ It's words that really hurt me."

Similarly, anthropologists know that personal nicknames are used in other cultures for social control and to enforce conformity and that these nicknames reflect and dramatize central values in a culture (e.g., Antoun 1968; McDowell 1981). The nicknames for ethnic groups in the United States, and for that matter in any society, abundantly show that they are used to create and maintain social class and status and are an effort by majorities to exert social control.

THE SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL USES OF NAME-CALLING

Every modern language has hundreds of disparaging nicknames for contacted ethnic outgroups. These terms reflect long histories of war, foreign occupations, and international trade (Roback 1944; Müller 1973). American English may have accumulated more nicknames than other modern languages because of the society's earlier and greater ethnic diversity, the historical prevalence of the competitive ethos, the comparatively high level of industrialization, greater social and geographic mobility, and the high utilization of technology—all of which have produced many points

of contact and conflict among groups (e.g., Sagarin 1962:39). Moreover, the grammatical structure and semantics of the English language make it particularly conducive to vocabularies of prejudice (Ehrlich 1973:21-22). And slang is particularly serviceable as a vocabulary of aggression and prejudice.

Words are weapons; and "hurling" epithets is a universal feature of hostile intergroup relations. Outgroup nicknames are preeminently a political vocabulary. Name-calling is a technique by which outgroups are defined as legitimate targets of aggression and is an effort to control outgroups by neutralizing their efforts to gain resources and influence values. For majorities, name-calling justifies inequality and discrimination by sanctioning invidious cultural comparisons. That is, nicknames are a device that helps produce and maintain social class and privilege. For minorities, name-calling, in addition redresses social injustices and dignifies an imposed minority status and thus is sometimes a form of accommodation to conflict. It is an ideological process of naming devils to explain past and present injustices and to make sense of a complex and indifferent world.

Name-calling also serves to generate and maintain social cohesion and to demarcate boundaries between conflicting groups. The conflict implied by defining a hostile, monolithic outgroup helps to heighten ethnic identities and to strengthen traditionalism. Outrgroup nicknames serve to define, to maintain, and to rationalize boundaries between groups and to stigmatize individuals who cross those boundaries by assimilation. In recent periods of rapid social change and in a climate of egalitarian ideology, much of the name-calling by minorities is to censure those groups who are thought to frustrate minority attainment and to scold individuals within their own group who seek social mobility independently of the group.

Ethnic identity in diverse urban society is maintained against pressures to assimilate, in part, by a negating process of pejorative and invidious distinction. Name-calling serves to make clear and to reiterate demarcations against which one favorably mirrors oneself and one's group. Nicknames then are labels for negative reference groups; they are a device by which people know who they are not and thereby who they are. They know that they are not like this or that group, often by the criterion implied in a nickname. On the other hand, Dundes (1971) suggests the possibility that ethnic groups may draw part of their identity from ethnic slurs directed at

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them, including nicknames. Slurs may reinforce certain group values, insofar as the stereotypes have some basis in ethnographic fact.

All these social uses of nicknames also mean that the words themselves are full of social history and can tell some of that history. Nonetheless the social problem of name-calling warrants mention at this point. Stereotypes often have real negative consequences for the self-concepts and sometimes also for the behavior of victims who conform to stereotypical images.

The Consequences of Stereotyping. There is a vast and venerable literature on the effects of stereotyping, which is abstracted here without tracing the well-known intellectual history of these ideas. The overt purpose of an ethnic epithet is to insult and to injure. But calling names is also an effort, whether quite consciously realized or not, to control the behavior of the disparaged group. This effort at social control by derogatory labeling is an effort to manipulate reality by the mysterious identity of the verbal symbol with the nonverbal fact. The belief is that if one can name or attach a label to an object, in this case, an ethnic individual or group, then one can wield power over it by simply calling its name. If the name is abusive, denigrating, scolding, or ridiculing, it is expected that this definition will elicit an appropriate response, such as causing the victim to cower, to be denigrated, to be scolded and thus to feel guilty, or to act out the prophecy of ridiculousness. Usually this prophecy is fulfilled in the eye of the beholder by selectively perceiving or misperceiving the real behavior of the group over which he seeks control. Yet the ensuing social process of labeling and stereotyping sometimes also leads to redefinitions of the relations among groups and sometimes ultimately has the prophesied effect upon the behavior and self-concept of the victim, a result that has been called "inauthentication."

The social psychological process of being controlled involves losing one's authenticity by acquiring a false image of oneself. The stereotypes conveyed by nicknames are one device by which some minority group persons are deindividualized or depersonalized. Minority group members accept many of the values of the society in which they live, including sometimes the stereotypical images of themselves. Blacks, for example, in the past had many nicknames for other ethnic blacks that were a system of color-caste coding and signaled an acceptance of one criterion of white racism. This

and other examples attest to one of the tragic implications of name-calling—eventual self-derogation of a group. Not only do groups sometimes accept the strereotyped image of themselves, but sometimes they reinforce it by conforming to its behavioral expectations. They have then affirmed the other's image and are thus controlled.

On the other hand, minorities, particularly blacks, have resisted stereotypes in creative ways. Derogatory labels, including names such as *nigger*, through inversion, have been given positive meanings within the group (Holt 1972; Brearley 1973, especially editor Dundes' notes). Broader stereotypes, such as thievery, sexual abandon, childishness, and laziness, through conversion, are acted out as techniques of aggression and ridicule against whites (Abrahams 1970:60-82).

For these and other reasons, the subject of ethnic slurs is usually regarded, analytically, as a problem in social psychology and, normatively, as a social problem.

NICKNAMES IN THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE TODAY

Francis Grose's (1785) *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, perhaps the first lexicon to include epithets for ethnic groups, listed terms then in British use for the Irish, Scots, Welsh, Jews, blacks, Gypsies, Dutch, English Catholics, and not surprisingly the colonial Americans. Some of the words were adopted by North American speakers of English, and a few listed by Grose are still heard today. A few Americanisms are traceable to the 1600s, such as *nigger*, and to the 1700s, such as *redman*. Many familiar terms, such as *wop*, *mick*, *kike*, *coon*, *greaser*, and *chinee*, have nineteenth-century origins, while others, such as *limey*, *wetback*, and *skibby*, appeared early in this century. Many others are of recent origin.

Most older nicknames have fallen into obsolescence, and many are archaic and wholly obsolete, though they remain a part of the history of culture and are pertinent to this study. Yet many terms, as an oral tradition, have a remarkable ability to be transmitted from generation to generation, if they remain useful. Many old terms for ethnic groups are still to be heard in street slang, in uneducated speech, and in regional dialects. New words are regularly invented that reflect contemporary social changes and register new outgroup awarenesses. Because outgroup nicknames are part of a vital

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language, they change over time in their connotations and the social contexts in which they are acceptably used. Ethnic nicknames also vary greatly in derogation, ranging from the overtly malicious and vicious to the puerile and jocular. All are offensive to some degree to some people, and this depends upon the speaker, the hearer, their relationship, and the social context in which they are used.

Many or perhaps most nicknames originated in various subcultures and seeped more widely into general usage when the subcultures came in contact with more general cultures, often through the mass media. Words that are most likely to seep into wider use are the slang of the underworld and prisons, drug users, the military, show business, teenagers, and college students. Importantly, many terms originated with minority groups, including loanwords from the languages and dialects they spoke.

The Role of Mass Media. As the country in the nineteenth century became more industrialized and the cities more diverse, the mass media, beginning with minstrelsy and vaudeville, reflected more and more the concerns, the interests, and the social worlds of their mainly urban audiences (e.g., Toll 1974:160-94). The mass media have had a special role in creating a vitality and popularity of nicknames, especially since the mid-nineteenth century. The modern media both reflect and create popular culture, using and in some cases inventing nicknames. The use of these words in everyday speech has been long reinforced by, and reflected in, the public media of print, popular songs, radio, movies, and, most recently, television.

The mass media actively influence language by popularizing slang and argots and introducing new words into wider usage, as well as rejuvenating old ones. Television and movies, responding to the new candor about ethnicity that began around 1970, are reintroducing some of the old ethnic epithets. Archie Bunker was probably responsible for taking *junglebunny* and other terms off city streets and into surburban living rooms. The tough big-city cops of the television crime dramas have rehabilitated the old slurs *wop*, *greaseball*, and others.

Through nicknames, the reflection of interethnic relations in the media has a long history. Some etymologists suspect, for example, that James Fenimore Cooper invented several nicknames for the mouths of his characters, such as the bogus Indian word *paleface* and the epithets *crow* and *wooly-head* for blacks. Mencken (1944) thought the term *octoroon*, modeled on *quadroon* (see chapter 5) may have derived from the title of a stage play in 1861 by Dion Boucicault.

The late nineteenth century and the rise of urban culture saw an enlarged role for the mass media in popularizing nicknames for ethnic groups. Popular songs virtually gave the language nicknames for blacks, such as *rastus*, *moke*, and *coon*, by giving the terms enormous popularity and perforce a certain legitimation. There was a popular song called "Rastus on Parade," published in 1896 by Kerry Mills. Mencken (1945:635) says that "*moke* was thrown into competition with *coon* in 1899 by the success of 'Smokey *Mokes*,' a popular song by Holsmann and Lind."

Coon, as a slur on blacks, became greatly popular by 1900. Originally a term for a white rustic, by the time of the Civil War *coon* was being applied to blacks (Flexner 1976:54). The raccoon has long been a symbol of cleverness, and some think that by the late nineteenth century the term may have had some positive use among urban blacks, perhaps under the influence of minstrelsy. Mencken (1945:632-33) tells the story of how *coon* was popularized as an ethnic slur. In 1896, Ernest Hogan, a black, wrote a song, "All *Coons* Look Alike to Me," though he did not intend it as a slur. Hogan was "crushed and amazed"at the resentment the song caused among blacks. As the song became popular, it was widely interpreted as a slur. Mencken quotes Edward B. Marks in *They All Sang* that the refrain became fighting words in New York and whites whistled it in the vicinity of blacks as a personal insult. In 1935, Marks wrote, "Hogan became an object of censure among all the Civil Service intelligentsia, and died haunted by the awful crime he had unwittingly committed against his race." Hogan's song was followed in 1899 by "Every Race Has a Flag But the Coon," written by two white men. In 1900, two other whites, Jefferson and Friedman, wrote "Coon, Coon, Coon," and, says Mencken, "from that time forward *coon* was firmly established in the American vocabulary."

The dialogs of movies in the 1930s and 1940s were sprinkled with mild epithets complementing the ethnic stereotypes scripted by writers and directors and played by actors of the period. Some of the ethnic nicknames heard in the dialogs were taken from actual slang but others were just made up. For example, Robert Taylor, playing an American in *A Yank at Oxford*

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(1937), derisively referred to the English as *beefeaters*, which actually has been a nickname for the English. In Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), Lionel Barrymore called Italian workers "a lot of *garlicky-heads*," which is perhaps the first and only record of this term. Sometimes euphemisms were used for harsher words, as when a character speaks of "a colored gentleman in the wood pile" in Irving Rapper's 1942 movie, *The Gay Sisters*. At least one movie title, Elia Kazan's *Pinky* (1949), starring Jeanne Crain in the title role, used a familiar term for a racially mixed woman. In Howard Hawks's screwball comedy, *Twentieth Century* (1934), a black butler was named Uncle Remus.

During World War II, movies helped revive and popularize many terms for the Germans, Italians, and Japanese, some of which were quickly applied to those national groups resident in this country before the war. To take a few of many examples, in *Somewhere I'll Find you* (1942), Clark Gable, having set out to Indo-China to find Lana Turner, referred to Japanese soldiers occupying Saigon as *japanese beetles* and spoke of "vermin" and the need for "pest control." In *Hollywood Canteen* (1944), Jack Benny introduced a short, stout, mustachioed orchestra conductor as *Mister Spaghetti*.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the movies rejuvenated many ethnic nicknames, sometimes with informed scholarship, to enhance period flavor, to create realism in dialog, and most profusely to dramatize the bigotry of characters. In *The Sand Pebbles* (1966), a movie set in the 1920s, Steve McQueen repeatedly referred to the Chinese as *slope-heads*. John Wayne, in one of his westerns, knowledgeably referred to a white rustic as a *peckerwood*, just as it was used before it became a black term for whites.

In television, Archie Bunker was the archetype of a bigot, and Americans learned and relearned dozens of pungent epithets from Archie's bad mouth. As with portrayals of nudity and sex, the media allow the use of ethnic slurs when they have "redeeming social importance" or when they are "integral to the story line." But like some nudity and sex in movies and television, some nicknames seem mischievously gratuitous.

Today, the mass media, primarily television, is the principal agent for diffusing old and new folklore. In addition, the media have inadvertently inspired a few nicknames such as perhaps that of the animated cartoon cat character "Sylvester" (a black term for whites), the title of a television series

"Mod Squad" (a derisive term for a couple, one black, one white), and even the name of an actor, Stepin Fetchit (which became a term for a black flunky), whose old films were seen by a new generation on television.

The American novel is well understood as a chronicler of social organization and change. The genre of the urban or city novel (Gelfant 1970)—novels set in cities and in which the city is also an actor—sometimes portray the ethnic diversity of cities and responses of characters to that diversity. Among novelists of the city, I think in this connection of Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, and Nelson Algren. The characters in Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) use the nicknames of ethnic groups around them in the diverse city. Farrell, in *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* (1934), used many ethnic nicknames, some of which were carried over into the recent television adaptation of the novel. Algren used ethnic epithets in *The Man With the Golden Arm* (1949). Ethnic nicknames are a staple in modern realistic novels of other sorts, such as the detective stories of Raymond Chandler. More recently, John Sayles in *Union Dues* (1977) sprinkled ethnic nicknames into the speech of his working-class Bostonians. John Gregory Dunne's *True Confessions* (1977) has a narrator and main character who uses period epithets.

The best-known nicknames for ethnic groups have become metaphors for prejudice. The terms are being used ironically in book titles—sometimes just the single word—to signal the theme of prejudice and discrimination. Dick Gregory's 1964 book, *Nigger: An Autobiography*, is one example. Gregory reportedly said, wryly, "Now any time a white man says *nigger*, he's advertising my book." John Keeble titled his 1980 novel *Yellowfish*, a nickname for Chinese illegal immigrants. And there is James Baldwin's 1964 *Blues for Mister Charlie*. In 1977, there was notice of a popular music group, "Kinky Friedman and His Texas Jewboys." Giddy trends sometimes touch academe. In 1972, a series of college textboooks used the titles "*Kike!*", "*Chink!*", "*Mick!*", and "*Wop!*" to dramatize that the subject was prejudice against each book's namesake. A leading professional journal of sociology, in the table of contents of a 1981 issue, introduced four articles, one each on blacks, Chinese, whites, and Native American Indians, with the waggish caption "4 on Red Skins—and White and Black."

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ethnic nicknames and other epithets were seen regularly in news and editorial writing. The press,

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until the end of World War II, used several genteel epithets, which were then considered appropriate. As late as the 1950s, regional papers on occasion deliberately printed *negro* with a lowercase initial or made a pejorative by attaching the suffix *-ess* to the proper name of a group, as in *Jewess*. Except with literary, dramatic, and academic license, the press and broadcast media now for the most part carefully avoid locutions that smack of being ethnic epithets. In an atmosphere of heightened ethnic sensibilities, even the Oxford English dictionaries have come under criticism for recording certain ethnic slurs (Burchfield 1980).

Writers of the media and academicians are part of the social processes of naming new social realities and they occasionally slip into usages, including a few nicknames, that eventually will be understood as words that characterize, as well as indicate, their referents. Many fewer such terms are used today, the targets are different, and the allusions are more apt to be coded, but a few epithets are still in good repute. Lately, there is a penchant among journalists and academics to make nouns from adjectives and combining forms, such as *ethnic, Hispanic, Afro-, and Anglo-*, in the scramble to indicate and sometimes to characterize new ethnic realities. All these media influences have kept, and continue to keep, nicknames for ethnic groups alive in American English.

CHAPTER 2 TERMS OF ABUSE AS CHRONICLES OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT

Familiarity breeds contempt.—Aesop, c.620–c.560 B.C., from *The Fox and the Lion*

The social uses of nicknames discussed above set the background for viewing them next as reflections of social organization and change. This chapter considers what amounts to a slang vocabulary of anxiety and aggression arising from structural strains in society—a lexical culture that responds to population size, population density, and social variety. These considerations are built on the early work of others. Most scholarly research on this topic is highly ideographic, such as etymological and onomatological studies of particular nicknames. Lexicographers over the years have compiled most of these words in specialized dictionaries, and these will be discussed in the next chapter. H. L. Mencken (1936:294-300; 1945:595-639) made the first major etymological study of nicknames for ethnic groups in *The American Language*, beginning with the early editions around 1920. The British lexicographers, Ernest Weekley (1932:154-66) and Eric Partridge (1933:3-9) also wrote early on English terms of xenophobia.

EARLY STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Social analyses of this vocabulary are few and far between. William Graham Sumner (1906:27-30) briefly described the common ethnic epithet as the verbal expression of *ethnocentrism*. Wilmoth Carter (1944), a sociologist, listed and classified certain terms by group target and by themes of derogation. A. A. Roback (1944), a psychologist, made the first major study of ethnic slurs or "ethnophaulisms," as he called them generically. Erdman Palmore (1962), a sociologist, made, to the best of my knowledge, the first quantitative analysis of nicknames for ethnic groups in a society. Kantrowitz

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names used among the ethnic groups of Chicago, who, I note, lived in such proximity and high visibility.

At the same time, ethnic variety in cities stimulates ethnocentrism and its supporting cultures and, in doing so, creates the social distances that maintain and intensify the variety. Georg Simmel (1904), the early German sociologist of urbanism, believed that the antipathies among diverse social types in the close quarters and daily contacts of big city life served to maintain the distances and buffers that made coexistence or social pluralism possible. The sum of this conflict, Simmel seemed to suggest, is a form of urban sociocultural integration.

Fischer (1975), revising Louis Wirth's (1938) famous hypothesis of urbanism as a way of life, which was greatly influenced by Simmel, theorizes that the city, due to its size and concentration, "produces a diversity of subcultures, strengthens them, and fosters diffusion among them." Taking the special case of ethnic subculture, Fischer argues that the size and ethnic diversity of cities create pressures on ethnic groups, on the one hand to assimilate, but on the other, to intensify or at least to maintain cohesion and ethnic identity. New cultural contacts and the often resulting clash or opposition, for a time at least, reinforce traditional ethnic cultures. Fischer (1976:132) says that ethnic contact in cities produces "mutual revulsion" and increases ethnocentrism and so strengthens ethnic cultures. I will add that this seems to allow ethnic groups to bear diversity or pluralism.

Urban culture is emergent. Yancey, Ericksen, and Juliani (1976) and Taylor (1979) reorganized theory to argue that situations, often demographic and economic ones, such as structural isolation and competition, produce and reproduce ethnic culture. These situations almost always entail encounters with other groups, whether face-to-face or through indirect economic and social forces. Names for outgroups are chronicles of these encounters. And insofar as these encounters resulted in assimilation, another large vocabulary sets apart marginal persons and assimilators.

There is no doubt that urbanization and, then, urbanism universally result in semantic innovation. Epstein (1959) gives us a superb description of how the new experiences and new concerns of highly diverse ethnic immigrants to the emerging urban communities of the copperbelt in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, resulted in new words for new social objects. After noting the influence of the mass media—newspapers and magazines—

on linguistic innovation, Epstein writes that "One development of particular interest is the growth of a new vocabulary of personal abuse, much of which originated in a purely political context" (p. 334). These terms tend to be generalized, and "In times of social tension the use of such terms can be a powerful sanction in promoting social and ideological conformity" (p. 335). Epstein argues that prestige is the single common thread that runs through the new vocabulary of urbanism, including words for the town itself, beer drinking, occupations, country bumpkins, physical appearances (especially light color), and a few ethnic epithets. Epstein sees the effort to ascribe status through semantic innovation as a key to understanding the social organization of African towns. I will show in the chapters that follow that ethnic name-calling in American history is a similar effort to stratify groups in the local community and in the society by ascribing lower ethnic status and by using similar symbols of prestige, such as color, occupation, place of residence, and many other allusions.

Group Size. The absolute and relative size of ethnic groups is both a direct cause of and a proxy for the several other ecological causal factors that prompt contact and aggravate conflict, such as density of settlement, awareness of competition, and social and cultural prominence by force of numbers. Many studies have shown that group size is directly related to opportunities for intergroup contact. These contacts may be conflictful (Blalock 1967:143-89; Blau 1977:19-44) or they may engender intergroup liking (Laumann 1973:43, 45, 238-40), depending upon the context of the contact. Group size, then, should predict the number or variety of accumulated nicknames for ethnic groups, because, first, size has an independent effect on intergroup contacts and, second, size precipitates and proxies other ecological situations. Insofar as these contacts result in conflict, they also result in social distance, ethnocentrism, and prejudice, as well as their display in nicknaming.

AN OVERVIEW

Six propositions summarize at the outset the major findings and conclusions of the study:

(1) *The population size of ethnic groups (a proxy for the number of contact points and the amount of conflictful interaction among groups) predicts the*

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number of nicknames that have accumulated for particular groups. The largest ethnic groups, including those who make up the white Protestant majority, have been called the greatest number of nicknames. And most groups have been nicknamed with a variety of terms in direct proportion to their relative size in the plural society. Not only does the number of different nicknames increase with population size, but the number of variants of many prototypical forms also increases.

(2) *Variation unexplained by size is accounted for by other demographic and ecological variables.* Historical outbursts of name-calling are associated with waves of immigration, settlement patterns, concentration in cities, group occupational specialization, and internal migrations.

(3) *The nicknames document an awareness of the subcultural distinctiveness of quasi-ethnic groups, especially those cut along regional, class, and denominational lines.* Quasi-ethnic groups, which are products of long, postimmigration experiences, are as likely to be involved in intergroup conflict as the more recent immigrant groups. Regional groups (Southerners and Yankees) and, to use Gordon's (1963:51-54) neologism, "ethclasses" are profusely nicknamed, commensurate with their relative size. The awareness of these quasi-ethnicities as outgroups underscores their structural isolation and suggests the competitive process by which their ethnic character emerged. A general awareness of an ethnic culture in society and the existence of names for it also signals that it exists as an ethnic culture.

(4) *Almost all outgroup nicknames are highly specific of their targets, referring to over 50 specific ethnic entities.* Relatively few intraracial nicknames refer to broad categories of religion or regional origin. The high degree of subcultural specificity in the historical accumulations suggests that ethnocentrism and prejudice do not stem from a categorical rejection of the culturally unlike, but are the result of specific conflicts between specific groups, often over specific issues.

(5) *The symbols of outgroups reflected in the stereotypes of nicknames make clear that intergroup conflict has to do with struggles for cultural influence, distribution of resources through class and status, and redressing resentments of an imposed hierarchy among ethnic groups.* Depreciation of outgroups by nicknames is mainly in terms of nonphysical or cultural differences, even between racially unlike groups. All nicknaming is basically an effort to assign lower status to outgroups, sometimes by simple force of nominal

derision. Conflict in the plural local community is reflected in nicknames that assign low status by reference, for example, to stigmatized occupational roles and ecological niches. Psychological explanations of racism emphasize notions about differences in intelligence, but this is the allusion of only a few nicknames for racial minorities; allusions to low intelligence are as frequent among names for white groups.

(6) *Other nicknames denominate marginal and assimilating persons and document the process of ethnic variegation.* There are many words for descendants of racially unlike groups and for persons who are assimilating within their own lifetime or between generations. These deviations and departures from ingroup norms are scolded through use of reproving and derisive nicknames that stigmatize personal appearances and behaviors. The words document the strains of ethnic change and emergence.

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CHAPTER 3 THE HISTORICAL LEXICON OF ETHNIC EPITHETS

Much of the slang-maker's skill is spent on foul ideas, which make the Slang Dictionary, at its best, an unpresentable book; while short of this limit, there is an ugly air about lists of words so largely coined by vagabonds and criminals, whose grotesque fancy plays fitfully round the real wretchedness of their lives....—E.B. Tylor, "The Philology of Slang," in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1874

This chapter has the straightforward but considerable task of classifying, listing, and annotating more than one thousand nicknames used for 57 ethnic categories, including about 50 specific ethnic groups. As defined earlier, an ethnic group is any racial, religious, national-origin, language, or regional category of subculturally distinct persons, regardless of size, power, or generational status. This word list is more than twice as long as any previous compilation of these terms. The list aims to exhaust the terms that, over the past two centuries, have gained enough use to be noticed and published in scholarly records of American English.

All the nicknames are Americanisms in the broadest sense of that term. Many of the words were coined in America but many others were loanwords, especially from British English, but also from Spanish, French, German, Yiddish, and West African languages—the languages of major immigrant groups. The loanwords became Americanisms, in the broad sense, when they took on new meanings as they were applied, in special circumstances, to groups living in the United States. All the terms are listed in American sources, usually multiple ones, and all are labeled, in at least one source, as having American use.

Excluded are nicknames for residents of many U.S. states, a variety of proposed but never adopted proper names for ethnic groups, terms of general xenophobia used by certain groups for all outgroups, and political epithets

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referring coincidentally to ethnic groups but without the intent to derogate their ethnicity. Although terms for political and geographic groups are excluded, their close kinship with nicknames for ethnic entities underscores the political and regional dimension of ethnicity in America. Appendix A, near the end of the book, is a short essay on classes of terms that are related to nicknames for specific ethnic groups but are excluded from this list for various reasons.

The conventions of my annotations in the word list are explained in detail in Appendix B, which also includes discussions of problems in etymologies, loanwords, gender referents, devices of pejoration, and other conventions.

The Boundaries of the List. The time span for the accumulation of the words is from the colonial period, when the first terms appeared in American English, to about 1970. Language scholars have not yet recorded, or at least not yet published, nicknames prompted by the newest immigrations, especially since 1965, from Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

As the criterion of inclusion, each word appears in one or more scholarly, published records of slang and dialectal speech in American English. Usually I have listed a term if a scholar reported it, certainly if it is reported with some explanation or if I found it in multiple sources. Many of the terms of course were highly ephemeral, but I have tried to exclude terms that were clearly nonce words.

Many of the terms never had wide, general use in American English, but had restricted use in the slang and dialects of regions, certain cities, social classes, ethnic groups, and other subcultures. I include many words that were local in use, reflecting patterns of ethnic settlement. It cannot be known how widely many words were used, especially the majority that are not familiar today because they have not survived.

All nicknames in the list are to a degree derogatory because they were not the consensually favored name for a group among members of that group. I have made no effort to label the derogation as strong or mild, or as intentional or unintentional. The number of terms for a group indicates the variety of imputed images by which people have tried to diminish the power, cultural authority, or dignity of that group. Almost every American ethnic group with a population exceeding 100,000 has been called recorded nicknames.

Sources. The compilation is secondary in that it is cumulated from published sources. That is, none of the names were collected by my direct observation of use or directly from informants. Most terms have accumulated over many years from edition to edition of certain dictionaries and from generation to generation of dictionaries of Americanisms and slang. Most words for this study were collected by scanning specialized dictionaries and other compilations of Americanisms, which are cited below and listed under References. For the literature before about 1939, I used the dictionaries of Americanisms listed by Burke (1939:2-12).

The nicknames in published sources were compiled by three basic techniques. Early compilations were from observations of everyday speech. Later compilations were collected from the mass media, such as popular and regional novels and newspapers. Most recently, this vocabulary has been collected systematically by sample surveys of local, regional, and national populations (e.g., Pederson 1964; Tarpley 1970; McDavid and Witham 1974; and Cassidy, forthcoming). Most nineteenth-century and earlier terms may be found in De Vere (1871), Bartlett (1877), Maitland (1891), Farmer (1889), Clapin (1902), and Thornton (1912). Many of these terms were brought forward and new twentieth-century words added by Mencken (1936, 1945, 1963), Weseen (1934), Roback (1944), Berrey and Van Den Bark (1953), Weingarten (1954), Franklyn (1963), Major (1970), Roberts (1971), Claerbaut (1972), Dahlskog (1972), Wentworth and Flexner (1975), Spears (1981), and many others. For other than slang, Craigie and Hulbert (1938-44), Mathews (1951), and Avis (1967) were used to date many terms and to identify North Americanisms. For slang, Flexner (1976) is useful for etymologies, for datings, and particularly for setting words in historical contexts. Wall and Przebienda (1969) was used to locate discussions of certain terms in the literature. Partridge (1970) is useful for etymologies of loan words from British English. The several unabridged dictionaries of English were also used for etymologies, though they do not include many terms of slang.

Most nicknames for American ethnic groups have since about 1950 accumulated into a few single sources. About 500 terms appear in Berrey and Van Den Bark (1953), which is the largest single list. Regrettably, they do not include sources, etymologies, or dates for the words. Wentworth and Flexner (1975) list only 275 terms, but supply many datings, etymologies,

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and examples of literary uses. Spears (1981) lists roughly 600 American terms, collected chiefly from Weseen (1934), Berry and Van Den Bark (1953), and Wentworth and Flexner (1975).

About one-fourth of the words were collected from other published sources, many of which in other connections are cited in the text. All are scholarly or otherwise reliable records of actual use. Each additional source yielded from one to twenty items. The sources, of course, list many of the same words, though sometimes giving variant meanings, uses, referents, and etymologies. The repetitions and the process of resolving discrepancies served to clarify many issues of group and trait references. As additional items were found less and less often it became clear that closure for this vocabulary was almost complete down to about 1970.

Generic and Particular Terms. All nicknames for ethnic persons are on a continuum from the generic to the particular, from those that refer to any or all persons of a group to those that refer to ethnic persons with a particular trait. Usually, I have included the generic and excluded the highly particular, but I have had to make certain rules about the middle ground. I include all terms that are primarily or exclusively masculine or feminine and all terms that are specific to all children or to all younger or older adults.

Many nicknames originally denominated ethnic persons engaged in socially unapproved roles, such as low-status or stigmatized occupations, military activities against the name-callers, gangsterism, and prostitution. I include all such terms that originally were particular in some way but later became generic or were used with wide, loose application. For example, *hoofer* in the 1920s was a name for a black dancer. The term was generalized to mean other black men; it is included. But *shot*, a black gangster in the same period, apparently was never used more generally; it is excluded. Similarly, *nonpromotable* was a euphemistic term for a black who, simply because of his race, was stuck at a level beneath his qualifications; it is excluded. *Laundry-queen*, on the other hand, apparently was applied widely to black women; it is included.

Finally, some nicknames originally denominated low-status, or less often, high-status segments of a group. These terms are often made generic, and most are included. However, about 500 terms for poor and rustic white Protestants are not included, but in chapter 4 they are separately taken into account.

The Number of Target Groups. The *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Thernstrom, Orlov, and Handlin 1980) has 106 group entries, which the editors claim are "almost exhaustive" of ethnic groups living in the United States. I found nicknames for 54 groups, all of which correspond to an entry in the *Encyclopedia*. Perhaps as many as 25 additional groups listed in the *Encyclopedia* also have been targets of these terms. Name-callers often do not distinguish, for example, among ethnic groups who speak the same or similar languages, such as Spanish or the Slavic languages. In short, certainly half and perhaps as many as three-quarters of all ethnic groups in the United States have been targets of recorded nicknames. The Armenians, Danes, Finns, and Slovaks are the only sizable European groups for which I found no specific terms. It is also noteworthy that, down to about 1970, I found no words for specific Central or South American groups, Dominicans, or Cubans living in the United States. These groups, nonetheless, were called several of the general terms for any Spanish-speaking person.

Dating. All dates should be considered approximate. Many of the dates, which are taken from highly authoritative sources, are probably accurate to the year indicated. This is usually the date of the earliest example found in print, which does not preclude the existence of yet earlier printed uses and certainly not earlier oral use. My special objective in dating terms is to associate their emergence with historically significant periods, such as wars, economic depressions, migrations, waves of immigration, periods of rapid urbanization, and so on. It is enough for my purposes to fix dates to a decade or even to a wider period. Yet most of the terms are not dated here, for I had no hint from the sources when they appeared. It is particularly difficult to determine when loanwords seeped into American English. Older, better-known terms, especially those considered colloquial or dialectal rather than slang, are more apt to be dated by the sources. Newer, especially slang, terms that appeared in this century are less apt to be dated. Judging from the publication date of the sources, it is my impression that most of the undated terms appeared before 1930, and the vast majority appeared before 1950. Most undated terms in recent dictionaries and word lists can be found in sources published in the 1930s and 1940s. Most nicknames for the European groups who arrived in the "new" immigrations after 1880 had appeared by the 1930s. After about 1930, the elaboration of nicknames for European

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groups seemed to stabilize while the terms for racial minorities continued to flourish until the 1960s.

The Scheme of Classification. The names are classified by 57 ethnic categories, including several general racial, regional, and religious categories. The terms for each group are listed in alphabetical order under a proper name for the ethnic group. The proper, correct, or preferred name for several groups is at issue. I adopted the proper names used by the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, though this still leaves several problems.

The largest number of nicknames is aimed at black Americans—over 200 terms and half again as many variants. Terms for blacks and terms for whites used by blacks, the second largest category of terms, are each subclassified by the allusions of the words. (Nicknames for all other groups are, for each group, presented in a single alphabetical list.) For these two longest lists of terms, each aimed at a racial category, it is useful and more readable to subclassify the words. This also shows with two major examples some of the taxonomic problems in developing categories for the examination of stereotypes in the next chapter.

THE WORD LIST

ACADIANS: **acadian-french** [also *acadian-frenchman, french-acadian.* Used for the 20,000 Acadians in northern Maine]; **cajun** [or *cajen.* 1868. Clipped colloquial form of Acadian]; **coon-ass** [also *coonie*]; **cree-owls** [19th century. From a burlesque of *Creole*]; **frenchie, -y**; **frog** [cf. *frog* for French and French Canadians]; **swamp-rat.**

AFRO-AMERICANS — The Name "Negro" and Its Alterations: **chigro** [a punning blend of *chigger* and negro, as a sarcastic allusion to the "proper" name for chiggers, the insects]; **'gar** [clipped form of *niggar*, a dialectal pronunciation of *nigger*]; **negress** [fem. Also *niggeress*]; **negro** [17th century. From Spanish and Portuguese, *negro*, black. On its offensiveness, see Bennett and see Moore]; **negro-fellow** [19th century. Clapin says, "An opprobrious term for a black man, supposed to carry intensive contempt with it"]; **nig** [1828. Shortened from *nigger*]; **nigger** [or *niggor* (1689), *neger, negger*]; **nigger-baby** [a child]; **nigger-boy** [1825]; **niggerdom**; **nigger-gal** [fem.]; **niggerkin** [a child]; **niggerling** [a child]; **niggero** [a punning blend of *nigger* and *negro*]; **niggra** [or *nigrah*. The infamous mispronunciation of *Negro*. See McDavid (1960) on the pronunciation of *Negro* as a slur]; **nig-nog** [a loanword from British English. Originally, it designated a West Indian or African in the U.K.].

"Black" and Terms Modified by It: **black** [on its offensiveness before the late 1960s, see Robbins]; **blackamoor** [late 17th century. From *black + moor*]; **blackamuffin** [blend of *blackamoor* and *ragamuffin*]; **black-angus**; **black-bean**; **black-beauty** [perhaps an allusion either to the novel and movie, *Black Beauty*, about a black horse, or to the 1960s phrase, "black is beautiful"]; **black-bird** [late 19th century]; **black-cunt** [fem.]; **black-diamond**; **black-doll** [fem.]; **black-fellow** [19th century. Often just *fellow*]; **black-gunga** [origin not known to me]; **black-head**; **black-indian**; **black-ivory** [the term for blacks sold in the lucrative African slave trade. Also *black-cattle*. 1819]; **black-jacks**; **black-mama** [fem.]; **black-out**; **black-rascal**; **black-skirt** [fem.]; **black-teapot**; **black-tulip** [from the popular name for a type of dark-colored tulip]. **blacky, -ey, -ie** [1815].

Color Allusions, Other than "Black" and "Negro": **blue** [19th century.

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Animal Metaphors: **ape** [also *baboon*]; **bat** [fem.]; **brer-terrapin** [also *terrapin*]; **buck** [1800. Also *buck-nigger* (1842)]; **bull-nigger** [19th century]; **coon** [1862. Popular after 1896. From *raccoon*. See discussion in chapter 1]; **crow** [1730s]; **jar-head** [the same term, a Southernism, means a mule]; **jungle-bunny** [1920s. Also *african-bunny, nairobi-jackrabbit*]; **mare-nigger** [fem.]; **monkey; monkey-jane** [fem. 1920s]; **mule; muskrat** [also shortened to *musk*]; **possum** [from *opossum*, supposedly either for hunting or for eating them]; **skunk** [often *black-skunk*].

Stereotypes of Low Intelligence: **hard-head** [also *thick-head, bone-head*]; **rock** [perhaps shortened from such as "rock-head"].

Status Diminution: **aunt** [fem. Early 1830s. Also *auntie, -ey*. Used for older women]; **bad-nigger** [19th century]; **bitch**; [fem. Often *black-bitch*]; **boy** [1630s. Often *black-boy*]; **covess-dinge** [fem. 1850s. *Covess*, a woman, from *cove*, old slang for a fellow. Cf. *dinge*]; **dange-broad** [fem. From old adjective *dange*, sexy]; **dinge** [1848. Backformation from *dingey, -y* (1909), often a child]; **dink** [perhaps a backformation from *dinky* (adj.), of small value. Also *dinkey* for a child (late 19th century)]; **goon** [perhaps shortened from *gooney*, a simpleton. *Goonie*, for a black U.S. Virgin Islander, is a possible cognate]; **jit** [especially, fem. From *jitney*, a five-cent piece, hence a thing of small value]; **poontang** [fem. 1870s. From Louisiana French *putain*, whore]; **pork-chop** [a term applied also to other groups]; **seedy; trash** [often *black-trash*]; **uncle** [late 1820s. Used for older men. Cf. *aunt, auntie*]; **wench** [fem. 1765. Often *negro-* or *nigger-wench* (1715)].

AMERICAN INDIANS: **abergoin** [or *abrogan*. 19th century. Alterations of *aborigine*]; **barbarian** [19th century. Also *heathen, beast, wildman*. Cf. *savage* and *siwash*]; **blanket-indian** [1875. Also *stick-indian* and other terms for unassimilated Indians]; **bow-and-arrow** [also *war-whoop* and other such images]; **brave** [1837. Used by James Fenimore Cooper. From French, *brave*, brave, good, worthy]; **buck** [1630]; **chief** [also *chief-rain-in-the-face, sitting-bull*, and other sarcastic applications of the idea of "chief"]; **copperhead** [used by early Dutch settlers. From the name of the snake to connote color and treachery]; **hiawatha** [from the namesake character in "The Song of Hiawatha," an 1855 verse by Longfellow]; **hooch** [or *hootch*. 1899. Probably from the reputation of high alcohol consumption by some Natives. *Hooch*, meaning liquor, is short for *Hoochinoo*, an alteration of *Hutsnuwu*, the name of an Alaskan Indian group who made liquor]; **injun** [1825. Colloquial for *Indian* (1602). Earlier form was *injen* (1680)]; **'jin** [1940s. Used by blacks. A clipped and altered *injun*]; **lo** [also *mister-lo* (1871), *poor-lo* (1891). Mencken (1963) says derived from Alexander Pope's verse: "Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind / Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind"]; **mister-john** [1870]; **papoose** [1633. From Algonquian for "baby" or "child." Later used for any Native child]; **red** [1878]; **red-brother** [1832]; **red-devil** [1834]; **red-indian** [1878]; **red-man** [1725]; **red-race** [19th century]; **red-skin** [1699]; **savage** [late 19th century. Cf. *siwash*]; **siwash** [1852. Also *siwash-indian*. From French *sauvage*, savage]; **smoked-ham; smokey, son-of-the-forest; squaw** [1634. From various Algonquian words for "woman." Later used for any Native woman]; **vanishing-american**.

NOTE: Many nicknames for specific ethnic groups and local settlements of Native American Indians, which were used locally, are omitted from this list. The list is confined to nicknames that were used for any Indian, regardless of ethnicity.

APPALACHIANS: **briar; brush-ape** [1920]; **corn-cracker** [19th century]; **hard-head; hillbilly** [c. 1900. The *-billy* component is a nickname for any fellow]; **hillnelly** [fem. Modeled on *hillbilly*]; **mountain-boomer** [also *mountain-hoosier*]; **mountaineer; mountie; one-eye** [Wentworth and Flexner say that the term is from a belief that inbreeding in isolated hill communities cause eyes, through successive generations, to become closer together]; **ridge-runner; sam** [acronym for Southern Appalachian migrant]; **snake** [originally a West Virginian]; **wasp** [1950s. The acronym for White Appalachian Southern Protestant. Used for migrants to Chicago and other midwestern industrial cities].

ARABS; **aye-rab** [a deliberate mispronunciation of *Arab*, and it is offensive. See Lipski. Cf. *eye-talian* for Italians]; **dirty-arab; sheik** [especially offensive when pronounced "sheek"].

AUSTRALIANS AND NEW ZEALANDERS: **aussie, -ey** [or *ossie, ozzie*. Popular since WWI. Variantly, *arsie, -ey*, whose pejoration or jocularity is possibly reinforced by sound similarity to *arse*. All are short for *Australian*]; **cornstalk** [Partridge says from tall, slim physical appearance]; **currency-lad** [late 19th century. Perhaps, I speculate, a version of "remittance man," a soft, middle-class and unsuccessful Englishman in Australia who

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The U.S. Census offers historical data on country of birth, mother tongue, and race (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1913:992-97; 1933:349-53; 1973:98-123; 1975:116-18). The Census does not ask a question on religion but usually this can be inferred from the conjuncture of country of birth and mother tongue. Other sources are used for estimates of the number of Jews (Gutman 1966; Lazerwitz 1978). For white Christian groups, the most visibly ethnic persons are those who speak a foreign language or who are foreign-born. Actually, visible white ethnicity, such as retention of a traditional mother tongue, might persist into the second generation and even later for some groups.

On the other hand, some white groups, especially if they arrived speaking English, are more apt to lose the public signs of specific ethnicity after the first generation, except perhaps for the emblem of a surname. I have estimated the number of first-generation persons of each group, defined by mother tongue and country of birth. Relative differences in size of most groups would not change greatly if second-generation persons were added.

The racial and religious minorities present a different problem. Racial minorities and Jews, whether for reasons of racial stigma, religious minority, or ethnic persistence, have assimilated less than other groups. Outsiders are more likely to identify these particular persons as members of ethnic groups, regardless of generations removed from immigration. For these reasons, I use estimates of the number of persons of all generations for racial minorities and Jews. All generations of these groups are treated as equivalent to the first generation of other groups.

I found terms for 57 ethnic categories, but there are no usable historical population data for 15 of these. Census data permit size estimates of only 42 specific ethnic groups, and all 42 are among the 106 groups with entries in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Thernstrom, Orlov, and Handlin 1980). The analysis will first treat all 57 categories for which I found terms. I then analyze those 42 groups whose historical size can be estimated from census data. I found no terms for six of the 42, and they are given a value of zero on the dependent variable. I take account of some of the unestimated groups in a supplementary analysis.

The words entered the language at different times, mostly during the past century, in response to the changing ethnic composition of the population.

The value of the independent variable for each of the 42 groups is the mean population size across four decennial censuses—1880, 1910, 1930, and 1970.

Though the availability of certain types of census data influenced the choice of dates, each date fortunately is also significant for the analysis. The figures for 1880 (using of necessity only data for country of birth) index the population composition at the end of the Old Immigration and at the onset of the New Immigration, at the end of the Reconstruction, and during the period of great economic expansion and growth of the industrial city in the North. Estimates for 1910, 1930, and 1970 are based on the mother tongue of the foreign-born, often bounded by the country of birth. The figures for 1910 are more than a generation after 1880, at the apex of the industrial city in the North and Midwest, when the effects of the great New Immigration from eastern and southern Europe were greatly apparent, and perhaps the time when the American city was ethnically most diverse. The census of 1930, another generation later, was after the restriction of immigration in 1924. The U.S. Foreign Stock population also peaked in 1930; the German and Irish Foreign Stock peaked in 1900, but the Italian not until 1940 (Hutchinson 1956:6). The census of 1970 is the ideal cutoff. A new, less restrictive immigration law passed in 1965 began, by the early 1970s, to influence the relative size of some groups; the country is clearly moving into a new era of first-generation ethnic diversity. (I adjusted upward the 1970 census figure for foreign-born Mexicans with federal estimates of the number of illegal or unregistered aliens.) About 1970 is the cutoff also for the word inventory.

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The principal task of this section is to show the relation of the historical sizes of groups and the numbers of accumulated terms for them. A brief review of the allusions of these words to putative group traits will set the correlational analysis against a more substantive background. In table 4.1 the 1,078 basic terms are broken down into categories and subcategories. The 57 categories of ethnicity (including 4 multi-ethnic aggregates of religion and race) are listed horizontally. Six categories of stereotypical allusions are listed vertically. (See Ehrlich 1973:23-31 for a more general and complete categorization of ethnic stereotypes.) The 53 specific groups

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Table 4.1 Number of Nicknames for American Ethnic Groups by Target Group and by Their Allusions

Groups (N = 57)	Physical	Character	Names	Foods	Group Name	Other	Total
Acadians				1	3	3	7
Afro-Americans	105	14	14	3	16	81	233
American Indians	10	5		1	2	11	29
Appalachians		3		1	2	8	14
Arabs					1	2	3
Australians	1	1			2	4	8
Basques					1		1
Belgians					4		4
Bulgarians		1				1	2
Canadians, British					3	3	6
Catholics (generic)		2		2	2	7	13
Chinese	17	1		2	8	10	38
Cornish			2				2
Czechs				1	4	5	10
Dutch		1	2	4	2	5	14
East Indians						2	2
English		2	1	3	4	10	20
Eskimos					7	1	8
Filipinos	2				4	3	9
French			1	2	1	3	7
French Canadians	1		1	5	2	2	11
Germans	1	10	5	7	2	8	33
Greeks		1			1	3	5
Gypsies		3			1	2	6
Hungarians			1	1	4		6
Icelanders						1	1
Irish		8	17	2	2	26	55
Italians		3	6	11	5	20	45
Japanese	3	3			4	6	16
Jews	3	6	14	3	9	29	64
Koreans	2	1				1	4
Lithuanians					2	3	5
Mexicans	3	6	1	12	2	18	42
Mormons					1		1
Norwegians	1			1	5	5	12
Pacific Islanders	3	2		1	1	9	16
Pakistanis					1		1
Poles		1	1		4	5	11
Portuguese			2		3		5

Table 4.1 (continued)

Groups (N = 57)	Physical	Character	Names	Foods	Group Name	Other	Total
Protestants (generic)		1			1	1	3
Protestants (specific)		3	1		4	8	16
Puerto Ricans		4	2		3	4	13
Russians			1	2	2	4	9
Scots		1	5		2	3	11
Serbs & Croats			1			1	2
Slovenes					1		1
Southerners (U.S.)		6		2	3	10	21
Spaniards			2		2		4
Swedes	3	1	2	1	6	4	17
Swiss						3	3
Tri-Racial Isolates	16		13	2		37	68
Turks		1	1			1	3
Ukrainians					1		1
Vietnamese	2				1	5	8
Welsh			2		2	1	5
Whites (by blacks)	32	28	8	5	3	35	111
Yankees		5	1	1		6	13
Total N	205	124	107	76	146	420	1078
Total Row Percents	19.0	11.5	9.9	7.1	13.5	39.0	100.0

compose about half of all American ethnic groups, and include all of the sizable groups. Table 4.1 also indicates the total number of basic terms for each of the 57 categories.

The six categories of outgroup stereotypes and symbols in table 4.1 may be divided into two broad types. *Physical* traits are allusions to color, to shapes of eyes, heads, noses, and lips, and to hair texture. Physical traits account for 205 words, or 19 percent of all words for all groups. Nonphysical or, broadly, cultural traits are allusions to group or national *Character*, personal *Names* (forenames and surnames), ethnic *Foods*, altered proper *Group Names*, and *Other* cultural symbols.

Many but not most interracial terms refer to physical differences. Cultural allusions are more frequent themes, even in name-calling between blacks and whites. This observation requires a modification of Palmore's (1962:443) generalization that "when the outgroup is a different race, most ethnophaulisms expressed stereotyped physical differences." Nonetheless, 45 percent of

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the 233 terms for blacks refer to physical differences, mostly color, and physical difference is the most prevalent single theme. This is also generally true of terms for Native Americans and the Chinese.

National or group *Character* classifies 124 terms. These include allusions to putative "mental" traits, such as personality, character, intelligence, morality, civility, and political beliefs, and "behavioral" traits, such as grooming, sexual appetite, and demeanor. Personal *Names* categorizes 107 terms derived from given and family names that popularly symbolize a group, such as *pedro* and *murphy*. Some 76 other terms are collected under *Foods*. These are stereotyped notions about national dishes and beverages and about dietary preferences and habits, such as *herring-punisher*, *taco*, or *pepsi*. Altered *Group Names* categorizes 146 terms that derogate by deliberately misnaming with some alteration of the proper group name, such as *frenchy*. Most of these terms are substitutions, misspellings (and phonetically spelled mispronunciations), quaint forms, and other intentional alterations.

The large residual category of *Other* cultural symbols classifies a variety of 420 miscellaneous terms, 39 percent of the total, including terms that are classifiable into about 20 yet smaller but distinct categories, such as references to folk costumes popularly associated with a group. Five of these subsumed categories are large enough to warrant a brief description. First, about 30 terms are symbols of religious differences. Most are generic references to Catholics and Jews; some are specific references to white Protestants. These terms allude to symbols, such as the Cross, Mariolatry, rosaries, the Pope, circumcision, Friday and Lenten fasting, dietary law, and fundamentalist literalism. Second, about 20 terms are various kinds of phonic mimicry that imitate or ridicule accents or that make mocking allusions to stereotyped foreign-language phrases (e.g., *parleyvoo*). Third, about 30 terms refer to stereotypical occupations held in low esteem, such as menial or migrant labor (e.g., *wetback*), or to stigmatized occupations, such as money-lending, huckstering, and peddling (e.g., *shonkey*). Blacks, Jews, Italians, and Mexicans are most often stereotyped with low status occupations. Fourth, about 50 terms refer to low-status places or residences and express the status symbolism of local-community territory. Older terms of rural origin (e.g., *piney*), deride residence on land of small economic value in an agrarian society, such as swamps or brushwoods. More recent

terms derogate residence in low-status urban environments, such as slums, ghettos, and cities in general (e.g., *jew-norker*). Finally, about 20 terms simply assert the low status of the outgroup and make no allusion to specific physical or cultural traits, such as *gook*, *jit*, *dink*, *ringtail*, *honyock*, *charlie*, *gooney*, *zip*, and *white-trash*.

CONTACT, CONFLICT, AND VARIABILITY OF NAMING

In the sections that follow, I first associate the size of ethnic entities with the number of accumulated nicknames for major racial categories, for major religious categories, and then for 42 specific groups. Selected groups are finally examined on a case-by-case basis to specify the historical events and ecological situations that brought each group into contact and conflict with other groups and to explain, informally, the variation unexplained by size. Many of these situations are chronicled vividly and anecdotally by the terms.

Racial Outgroups. Table 4.2-A shows that the numbers of nicknames for broad racial entities have accumulated in the same rank order as these entities are represented in the total U.S. population. While the association is direct, it is also clear that white groups, in the aggregate, have been nicknamed with a disproportionately small variety of terms while blacks have been named with a disproportionately great variety. Further, 18.2 percent of all nicknames have been used for the three percent of the population comprising *Others*: Asian, Pacific, and indigenous Native American groups. Some, however, are war-related terms aimed at Asian and Pacific groups without noticeable concentrations in the continental United States before about 1970.

The largest numbers of terms for specific groups in table 4.1 are the 233 nicknames whites called blacks and the 111 nicknames blacks called whites. Though neither racial category is a single ethnic group, name-callers saw the other stereotypically as a monolith of culture and association. Blacks were the largest minority in the nation and commensurately have the largest number of nicknames. Yet the disproportionately great number of terms for blacks is clearly a result exaggerated by the historical and cultural particulars

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Table 4.2 A. Percent of All Nicknames by Major Racial Categories

Race	Percent Total U.S. Population: 1970	Percent All Nicknames	N Nicknames
White	85.0	60.2	649
Black	12.0	21.6	233
Other	3.0	18.2	196
Totals	100.0	100.0	1078

B. Percent of Nicknames for Whites by Major Religious Categories

Religion	Percent U.S. White Population: 1970s[a]	Percent Nicknames for White Groups	N Nicknames
Protestant	63.0	64.0	600[b]
Catholic	27.0	25.6	240
Jewish	3.0	6.8	64
Other White	7.0	3.6	34
Totals	100.0	100.0	938

[a]Estimates from NORC General Social Surveys, 1972-78

[b]200 for the 18 Protestant ethnic groups plus 400 for mostly Protestant poor whites and rustics, excluding 111 terms used by blacks for whites

of slavery and racism. The terms that blacks and whites called each other are the result of a long and bitter interaction, and the history of one set of terms, *mutatis mutandis*, is the history of the other.

The most infamous terms for blacks date from the slave system in the 1600s (Needler 1967). Other nicknames emerged in the 1700s, though most surviving terms appeared in the 1800s and inc eased in number and bitterness as a result of the Reconstruction and its economic aftermath, when blacks became an agrarian proletariat sometimes in competition with poor Southern whites. Correspondingly, a few of the oldest black terms for whites derive from West African languages (Cassidy 1975; 1978). Other black terms for whites record the oppression of slavery, and many more reflect the poverty and bitter interaction with whites in the rural South (Flexner 1976:53-59). After 1865, a variety of terms were coined for freed slaves (Mencken 1944). Most of the terms that blacks and whites have called one another originated in the rural South and chronicle that era of race relations.

The urbanization of the black population in this century and blacks' emergence as a ghettoized urban proletariat brought them into contact and conflict with many different white groups. White derisions of new black

roles in the city are clearly reflected in nicknames for blacks originating after about 1920. These new conflicts, moreover, stimulated the use and persistence of old nicknames from the agrarian South. Correspondingly, there appeared in the cities new black nicknames for whites that expressed resentments toward the new urban relationships, particularly status subordination. (See black terms for whites listed in chapter 3.)

Protestants, Catholics, Jews. The size principle also holds among the three major religious categories in the white population. Most nicknames in the language for white Protestant subgroups or "ethclasses" (Gordon 1963:51-54) are not, strictly speaking, outgroup terms and, for that reason, are not tabulated in table 4.1.

An extraordinary number, 400 to 500, of such ingroup terms have been used, mostly by white Protestants for other Protestant poor whites and rustics. Most of these terms are recorded in five linguistic atlases for the eastern states (McDavid and Witham 1974), the upper Midwest (Allen 1958), and the Gulf States (Pederson 1980). If the idea of "ethclass" is allowed equal status with that of ethnic group in the structural interpretation of intergroup nicknaming, then the 200 terms for the 18 Protestant groups in table 4.1 increase to 600, when a conservative estimate of 400 terms for poor whites and rustics is added.

Table 4.2-B shows that the number of nicknames for Protestants (600), 17 Catholic groups (240), and Jews (64) are in the same order as their respective population sizes. Moreover, the percentages for each category's population size and number of terms are strikingly similar. Whites have called other whites a total of 938 nicknames, which serves as a base N. Protestants are 63 percent of the white population and have been called 64 percent of the terms; Catholics are 27 percent and have been called 26 percent of the terms.

The Jews accumulated twice as many nicknames as would be expected from their relative size. Situational factors, interacting with the historical momentum of anti-Semitism (as in the case of blacks and the historical momentum of racism) resulted in more terms. Some of these might be attributed to the conflict-producing situations of immigrants concentrating in cities of the industrial North, settling in enclaves, and sometimes entering occupations with a public face, such as retailing. But it cannot be argued

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that Jews differed so greatly from certain other groups in such particulars. The dating of words suggest that ethnic contacts interacted with traditional anti-Semitism to produce a disproportionate variety of terms during the peak period of Ashkenazic immigration, about 1880 to 1910. Moreover, etymologies indicate that some nicknames did not originate in this country, but were originally from Europe. Perhaps a dozen terms for Jews have origins in the Old World languages of Yiddish, German, and Russian.

THE SIZE PRINCIPLE TESTED FOR 42 GROUPS

While the base N for table 4.2-A was the total U.S. population of 203 million in 1970, we now turn to a consideration using a different population base. The independent variable is defined as the number of persons in the first generation of each group, plus the number in all other generations in the case of Jews and racial minorities. This, it was reasoned, estimates the size of the segment of each group that to name-callers is most visibly the ethnic outgroup and the persons who are most likely to be targets. In 1970 this definition comprised 40,459,000 persons or about 20 percent of the total U.S. population. In table 4.3 the first column is the historical size (mean size for 1880, 1910, 1930, 1970). With this population base, the blacks and the Jews are the largest groups and commensurately have been called the greatest variety of names, but not disproportionately so compared to the size of other ethnic entities.

The coefficient of the correlation between the sizes of groups and the numbers of basic terms, excluding variants, for these groups is extremely high ($r = .97$). With a small number of observations, the Pearson r is highly responsive to extreme values, which can obscure or inflate a correlation. For the same reason that a large value dominates a mean with a small number of cases, a large value dominates a Pearson r. The blacks have high values for both population size and the number of names. Yet the ratio of names to population size is about the same for blacks as for other groups (see table 4.3). Thus, the inclusion of blacks does not distort the relationship between names and size, but it does contribute to the extremely high correlation coefficient. When the observation for blacks is dropped from the

Table 4.3 Larger Ethnic Groups by Estimates of Their Mean Population Size (1880, 1910, 1930, and 1970) and by the Number of Nicknames and Their Variants

Groups (N = 42)	Mean Size (in thousands)	Basic Terms	All Terms
Afro-Americans	12,720	233	335
Albanians	4	0	0
American Indians	410	29	39
Arabs	43	3	3
Armenians	28	0	0
Australians	14	8	10
Belgians	39	4	4
Bulgarians	10	2	2
Canadians, British	627	6	9
Chinese	172	38	52
Czechs	146	10	17
Danes	122	0	0
Dutch	110	14	17
East Indians	10	2	3
English	692	20	28
Finns	71	0	0
French	104	7	18
French Canadians	326	11	23
Germans	1,642	33	43
Greeks	125	5	5
Hungarians	163	6	9
Irish	1,050	55	63
Italians	1,028	45	51
Japanese	200	16	18
Jews	3,058	64	91
Lithuanians	100	5	8
Mexicans	1,014	42	57
Norwegians	256	12	15
Poles	594	11	13
Portuguese	56	5	9
Puerto Ricans	289	13	13
Romanians	31	0	0
Scots	238	11	16
Serbs & Croats	80	2	4
Slovaks	123	0	0
Slovenes	55	1	3
Spaniards	35	4	5

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Table 4.3 (continued)

Groups (N = 42)	Mean Size (in thousands)	Basic Terms	All Terms
Swedes	406	17	20
Swiss	93	3	3
Turks	8	3	3
Ukrainians	45	1	1
Welsh	60	5	7

correlation, the coefficient falls to $r = .83$ ($r^2 = .69$, $N = 41$), explaining 69 percent of the variation.

The strength of the basic relation is further clarified by dropping the other three racial minorities—American Indians, Japanese, and Chinese—all of which have more names than expected from their size, especially the Chinese. The coefficient for the 38 observations is $r = .89$, explaining 78 percent of the variation.

A most stringent test of the size hypothesis is to restrict the population to the 34 white Christian groups, each mainly Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant. The population estimates for the 34 groups are also uniformly based on the number of first-generation persons in the language community. The correlation among white Christian groups is $r = .86$, explaining 74 percent of the variance in the numbers of terms for these groups.

A final procedure demonstrates that defining the dependent variable as the number of basic terms, excluding variants, is a conservative procedure that does not inflate the correlation. When variants (see table 4.3) are added to basic terms (i.e., "All Terms" in table 4.3) to determine values of the dependent variable, the *r* coefficients cited above increase slightly or remain the same. The conservative coding procedure of subordinating the variants, though it lowers the correlation, better indicates the number of altogether different word images of groups.

All these coefficients indicate "true" correlations for each instance of population and variable definition. How much variation then is explained by the historical size of language communities? It seems conservative to say that about three-quarters of the variation has been explained.

It bears repeating at this point that I am not suggesting that prejudice, ethnocentrism, and social distance are a result only of group size. Rather, the greater numbers of contacts and conflicts with other groups, for which

size is a proxy, are factors that variegate expressions of prejudice. Common sense tells us that prejudice has an independent role in determining the number and type of epithets, especially for racial and religious minorities. Racism and anti-Semitism, in particular, are to an extent endemic cultural factors that exist prior to, and independent of, intergroup contact. Contact and conflict activate culturally latent racism and anti-Semitism, and these ideas become the ready substance of verbal aggression against these minorities. Yet these data suggest to me that intergroup contact and conflict also produce and reproduce prejudice, including that which we call racism and anti-Semitism, as well as releasing in expressive forms that which is already there.

SITUATIONAL FACTORS

About three-quarters of the variation in the number of nicknames is explained by the implications of historical group sizes, 1880 to 1970. This final section informally explains some of the unexplained quarter of the variation attributable to other historical and situational factors, mostly ecological and economic variables. A review of historical patterns of intergroup contact, which have combined with group size and its implications to produce more or fewer nicknames for certain groups, clarifies the picture. This also strengthens the size hypothesis by accounting for several groups that for various reasons could not be included in the formal correlational analysis.

Catholic Groups. The Irish were the largest of the early-arriving nineteenth-century Catholic immigrant groups, and they were profusely nicknamed (55 terms). Not all early nicknames for the Irish were directed at the Catholic Irish and it is impossible to know which ones or how many were aimed at the early-arriving Protestant Irish. The Protestant Irish from Ulster immigrated mainly before 1830. They settled in small towns and rural areas of the South and Appalachians. They also identified as "natives" and emerged as the "Scotch-Irish" to distinguish themselves from the later-arriving Catholics (Fallows 1979:19-22). Many of the surviving nicknames for the Irish are very old, some from the eighteenth century, and it is likely that the oldest nicknames were applied originally to the Protestants. For

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ethnic entities. However, some emerged as subculturally distinct regional groups, differentiated internally by class and denomination (Greeley 1974:253-70). The largest of these regional groups and perhaps the most distinctive is the white Southerners. Killian (1973), Reed (1973), and Tindall (1976) have made a case that white Southerners are a quasi-ethnic group. Dundes (1971) pointed out that the existence of slurs for a folk (i.e., a group) indicates an awareness of a folk and such an awareness may indicate the existence of a folk (i.e., ethnic) culture. Southerners are the largest white Protestant entity toward which specific nicknames are directed.

Regional isolation or lack of contacts with groups other than the blacks accounts for the small number of nicknames for white Southerners before about 1930. The dislocations of the Great Depression and World War II stimulated rural migrations to the cities and brought Southerners into contact with white groups in other regions, which stimulated most of the 21 terms. ("Appalachians," a closely related group, have been called 14 nicknames.) After the war, the migration of Appalachian and other Southern whites to the industrial cities of the Midwest prompted an array of new terms and a revival of old ones. Many, if not most, of the terms used by blacks for whites (table 4.1) referred originally to white Southerners, who were the principal outgroup contact for blacks. If a substantial fraction of terms, probably most, used for whites by blacks ($111 - x$) are added to the terms for "Appalachians" and Southerners used by other whites (35), then white Southerners and southern highlanders are more variously nicknamed [$(111 - x) + 35$] than any other white group. Only terms for blacks exceed the number of terms for Southerners calculated in this way. If Southerners had been included in the correlation procedure, this adjustment would set them in rank order and greatly toward the interval distance suggested by their large but undeterminable population size.

The Yankees are the other large regional group with a quasi-ethnic identity that has been called a variety of names. The New England Yankees, unlike the Southerners, have not accumulated a new nickname probably in over one hundred years. Nicknames for Southerners and southern highlanders, on the other hand, are old and new terms that became used by outsiders in this century as the regional isolation of the South and the Appalachian area ended because of world wars, economic depression, and labor migration.

Groups from the British Isles accumulated 38 terms. These groups are now much less distinct than the Continental Protestant groups, such as the Germans and the Scandinavians, and many of the terms are old. Many were used into this century, for old nicknames were kept alive and their use stimulated by continuing immigrations of people from the British Isles. These immigrants, such as the Cornish, were often urban and working-class and competed in the marketplace with similarly placed Catholic groups. Nonetheless, many of the nicknames were applied to the English, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, and Scotch-Irish who immigrated before the rise of the industrial city and who settled mainly in small towns and rural areas, all the while moving westward. When these groups settled in juxtaposition, for all their similarities viewed in retrospect, there were great rivalries and they called one another a great variety of names. These groups soon assimilated with one another and, later, with Protestant groups from northern Europe. Some of the early British-Isles immigrants, mainly the Scotch-Irish, became some of the white Southerners and highlanders considered above. White Protestants have remained disproportionately in small towns and rural areas (Anderson 1970:4-5). This was responsible for some of the cultural conflict between the rural areas and the cities and, correspondingly, pitched the Protestant Nativists against the Catholic, laboring, immigrant masses of the cities (Higham 1963).

Racial Minorities. Racial minorities have disproportionately more nicknames compared to white groups because of the exogenous factor of racism. Yet the size of racial minorities, compared to white groups, is still the principal determinant of the number of terms for them. All native, indigenous groups today number about one million (Wax 1971:27-41) and have been called 37 names, which reflect the history of racism and oppression of these groups. But the Chinese, a group half the size, have as many names (38 terms), because Native Americans, unlike the Chinese, have never been in great and sustained economic competition with whites. Indigenous groups were early relegated to reservations and to other rural areas, often with the poorest and then uncoveted land.

The Chinese are so variously nicknamed because in the nineteenth century they were the largest Asian immigrant minority in the nation, and they were thought to be the "ultimate alien." The terms, many of which

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date from the 1870s and 1880s, clearly echo the resentments toward the mass immigration for cheap industrial labor, which forced sharp competition with white, native-born labor. Compounding these conflicts with the native-born, the Chinese often settled in big cities and into large and pertinacious enclaves, which heightened their visibility. The late nineteenth century, moreover, was a period of gross ethnic stereotyping and ideological rationalizing that foreshadowed the closing of immigration. Spoehr (1973) argues that in California in the 1870s the exclusionist movement against the Chinese focused on value and cultural conflict, whereas at the same time racist feelings against blacks focused on notions of innate inferiority. These data seem to support this in that, while the terms for both groups are clearly racist, the nicknames for the Chinese lack the animal metaphors and, generally, the rabidity of nicknames for blacks.

The number of nicknames for the Japanese (16) is small, in contrast, though in 1970 the Japanese population exceeded that of the Chinese. Almost all the terms are clearly inspired by the hostilities of World War II (Seago 1947) rather than by domestic conflict, such as economic competition. *Skibby* was the only commonly heard name before the war. In the continental United States, there were almost 140,000 Japanese in 1930 and in 1970 the Japanese population was nearly 600,000. Many Japanese, concentrated in California, became small truck farmers of marginal land and after the war many entered small businesses. Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese in the continental United States have never been a large, visible urban proletariat seen as a threat to the jobs and wage rates of native-born labor.

The Filipinos, the next smaller racial minority, with a Foreign Stock population of between 200,000 and 300,000 in 1970, have nine nicknames. Similarly, Korean and Southeast Asian groups, commensurate with their even smaller numbers, have accumulated few or no terms stemming from domestic conflicts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ethnocentrism and prejudice toward outgroups, indexed by the variety of nicknames, result in large part from historical intergroup contact, interaction, and conflict in situations of economic competition, often in the local

community. The number and variety of nicknames signify more than a symptom of prejudice and an attendant social problem. Normative concerns, an emphasis on minorities as victims, and a singular focus on racial and immigrant ethnicity have fostered an empirically unwarranted impression of the nature of interethnic conflict. Instead of an image of majority groups unilaterally berating minorities, the study of the full vocabulary of ethnic conflict suggests that the plural society has been more of a back-and-forth struggle and one of shifting equilibria between groups, depending greatly on the fortunes of the economy. Verbal aggression is not only directed "downward" from majorities to repress minorities, but it also flows among similarly situated but competing groups, and is also directed "upward" from minorities to reprove majorities and as a form of protest. Moreover, the study corroborates that the struggles among ethnic groups have a great deal to do with class and status.

A basic fact emphasized by this study is that almost all groups in the plural society have been involved in name-making, name-calling—and being called names. Less obvious is that ethnic groups are nicknamed with a variety of terms in direct proportion to their aggregate contacts with other groups and not primarily as an inverse function of diminishing minority status. The largest majority and the largest minority groups have had the greatest number of contact points with other groups, which have spawned a commensurate number of different words for them. Nonetheless, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and other standing cultural prejudices have aggravated the conflict at these points of contact.

Any distraction from the idea that the roots of prejudice do not all lie within the prejudiced is forever open to the charge of "blaming the victim." I am not suggesting that groups somehow attract the unjust advances of prejudice and hostility simply because they are numerous. Rather, groups have many points of contact because they are numerous, hence under certain conditions enter into *conflict* with other groups over specific issues. Size and contact are not themselves the problem. It is conflict that in large part produces prejudice. And the amelioration of prejudice will largely be in the relief of conflict.

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CHAPTER 7 **AFTERWORD**

The lexical data presented in this study bear out, to my satisfaction, the summary propositions at the end of chapter 2. The historical inventory of ordinary ethnic epithets in American English chronicles social organization and change in an ethnically diverse America. More generally, the aggregate of these words is a remarkable example of the reflection of society in language, revealing images of ethnic America through the eyes of those who were in the fray. A sociological analysis of these words, which are too often regarded only for the prejudices they reflect, enlarges our understanding of their social origins in the rough and tumble of a diverse, especially urban society.

In the context of the sociology of intergroup relations, this study gives additional support to the idea that subjective ethnocentrism and prejudice grow out of objective situations that produce and reproduce conflict among groups. The lexical data show once again that ethnocentrism, which rationalizes and guides conflict, emerges when and where groups meet and struggle. Some of the old words are kept alive—and new ones invented—to the extent that they serve conflict today.

Many of the words, and the folk etymologies of several, are part of the urban folklore of ethnicity. As such, they are weapons of the ideologies of ethnic relations. For majorities, name-calling justifies inequality and discrimination by sanctioning invidious cultural comparisons in order to produce and maintain social class and ethnic privilege. For minorities, name-calling redresses social injustice and dignifies an imposed minority status.

I have construed the data to suggest that ethnic conflict is part and parcel of the more general social process of stratifying the local community and the nation. This activity, so richly expressed in nicknames for outgroups,

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includes relegation of newcomers to low status, efforts of high-ranking groups to maintain the order that ever threatens to change, pushing and shoving by groups in the middle to gain advantage over their equals and to maintain it over lower-ranking groups, and redressing by minority groups of their low status. Within groups, persons are called names to rank them with respect to their conformity to core values of the group.

The eminent dialectologist, Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (1979:9), about forty years ago wrote, "Lexical research is not so much linguistic research as research in the culture of a community." Lexical research, I will add, also can be research in the social organization of a community. One of the more engaging jobs sociologists have is to study the interplay between the ordinary stuff of everyday life, such as popular speech, and the organization of society itself.

APPENDIX A EXCLUDED CLASSES OF RELATED NICKNAMES

What sort of people do you have out there?—Waal, we've got some o' most all kinds: Pukes, Wolverines, Snags, Hoosiers, Griddle-greasers, Buck-eyes, Corn-crackers, Pot-soppers, Hard-heads, Hawk-eyes, Rackensacks, Linsey-woolseys, Red-horses, Mud-heads, Green-horns, Canada Patriots, Loafers, Masons, Anti-Masons, Mormons, and some few from the Jarseys.—William Irving Paulding, from *American Comedies*, 1847, p. 192

Chapter 3 lists only those nicknames that meet the criterion of a nounal epithet for persons of a specific ethnic outgroup. Several related classes of terms also denote or connote ethnicity and might seem obvious candidates for the lexicon. But for various reasons these terms do not meet the criterion and are excluded.

Ethnicity in American life is also displayed in lexical inventories that are not terms for specific ethnic groups, such as political epithets and nicknames for residents of particular states. While the targets sometimes are coincidentally persons of a particular ethnicity, their ethnicity was not the target of the nicknames. Such political epithets are excluded from the study and from the lists in chapter 3. Also excluded are terms of general xenophobia, proposed but unaccepted proper names for ethnic groups, and many words that have ethnic references but are either too oblique or too specific to include as generic nicknames. But each of these classes of names is related to, and is likely to be confused with, terms for specific groups. For these reasons each class warrants a brief description in order to distinguish between included and excluded classes of terms.

I have omitted many, probably more than a hundred, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century terms for North American political and regional factions, which were sometimes composed almost entirely of a particular

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originally alluded to the swords of soldiers who fought the Indians. In Canada, *kabloona* or *kabluna* [1744] and their English equivalents, *big-eyebrow*, shortened to *eyebrow*, were Native terms for a white man.

Finally, I excluded certain terms that are sometimes used with mild derogation yet are not really nicknames for ethnic groups. Adjectives when used as nouns seem to be derogative—*ethnic* when used as a code for blue-collar Catholic groups, *Hispanic* and *Latino* when used to stereotype the interests of all Latin American immigrant groups, *Appalachian* when used for any Southerner from the hill country, and *born-again* when used to reprove the emphasis on personal salvation among some evangelical Protestants. (The use of *Anglo* was mentioned above.)

I have excluded media and academic codewords for low-income blacks and other minorities, such as *inner-city youth*, *urban-youth*, *urban-poor*, *nonwhite*, *the-disadvantaged*, the *under-class*, *culturally-deprived*, and other jargon. *New Yorker* and *city-boy* are sometimes transparent codewords for Jews but are excluded. I have also excluded those euphemistic phrases that old immigrants used to describe new immigrants, such as *hyphenated-American* and *one-of-those-names-that-end-in-a-vowel*, and other such things.

APPENDIX B ANNOTATIONS

The word list in chapter 3 is briefly annotated to clarify the allusions, set the terms in historical and social context, and show available dates, gender, and remote etymologies. I do not explain allusions that are obvious to me and, I presume, to anyone generally familiar with American idioms, folklore, and popular culture. Most nicknames are clear references to physical differences, ethnic foods, personal names thought common in the groups, putative national character, transparent wordplays on the proper names of the groups, and a multitude of other familiar symbols.

Etymologies. Etymologies are indicated with surety only when there is a published source. I have not documented etymologies with citations, except for a few key, unusual, or disputed items. Almost all the origins can be verified by checking the major sources, such as Wentworth and Flexner (1975) or the unabridged dictionaries. Very few of my speculations are included, and they are confessed as they appear. I have also ignored the worst indulgences of speculation by others. Spurious etymologies are rife in older and in some of the newer but peripheral sources. The most familiar nicknames sometimes have folk etymologies, and I have examined these as a separate topic in chapter 6. In the word list, I report only authoritative etymologies that have not been challenged with equal authority. For a few items, I show two or more competing etymologies when there seems to be no strong reason to accept any one of them. Depending on their degree of plausibility, some etymologies are indicated by either "perhaps" or "probably."

Variants. The subordination of most, but not all, variants of a full entry serves both to display more compactly the variety of basic stereotypical images of groups and to preserve the full record of lexical variation. Full entries are listed in boldface between semicolons. Most variants of full entries are listed in italics between brackets with other annotative material.

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I also have excluded from full entry all variant spellings, most diminutive forms, and most shortened forms. In some cases, a variant has become important in its own right and is entered as a separate item. I have excluded from full entry most variants that appear as compound phrases with added adjectival components. In a few cases, I have grouped under the main entry etymologically unrelated terms with similar themes when I decided that they were much less used or possibly nonce words.

Loan Words. Many terms for ethnic groups in languages other than English spoken in America at various times in history have entered both formal and informal American English. Some of these terms are loans from the languages of the indigenous peoples. The altogether foreign words came with foreign influences, usually immigrations. Many old words are from Dutch, German, Spanish, French, and various West African languages. Then came the words from Italian, Polish, Czech, Yiddish, and most recently a new wave of words from Latin American Spanish. European wars brought words from German, and adventures in the Pacific brought a few from Japanese and other Asian languages. Some loanwords seep into English with their original spellings and meanings intact. Others are anglicized and given variant meanings, while some are altered almost beyond recognition. I have indicated the origins of loanwords that I could identify from the sources. Etymology is a complicated and technical field, and loanwords come into a language in highly roundabout ways. In this regard I have, as a layman, brushed with many possibilities for error.

Gender. Many nicknames have overt or implied gender referents. The ethnic nickname has in large part been a male phenomenon, expressing male anxieties and conflicts, especially those of competition and rivalry in the workplace. Most names were directed principally at the men of outgroups, though most are not gender specific. I have not speculated in print whether the words were usually inclusive of both men and women or were limited only to men. About half of the terms specific of gender are feminine; many are not obvious, so all are marked *fem*. Feminine variants are counted as separate items because they, unlike most specifically masculine terms, often attach sexual insult to ethnic derogation. This gives them a singular importance, which as a result increases the inventory of basic terms.

Pejoration. All nicknames for ethnic groups represent an effort to diminish the status of an outgroup, sometimes simply by rhetorical force. Pejoration is often accomplished—or increased—by the use of suffixes and modifiers. One morphemic element with an unfavorable connotation is the suffix *-ess* to make a name feminine, such as *jewess*, *mulatress*, *negress*, and *patess*. This device also suggests an animal metaphor, since the same suffix is often used to feminize the names of feline species.

In English, names are often made diminutive witrh the endings *-y* or *-ie*, which connote small size, youth, familiarity, or affection. Traditional nicknames for persons often use these endings, such as *Jimmy* or *Suzie*. Similarly, scores of nicknames for ethnic groups terminate in *-y* or *-ie*. In nonethnic usage, the ending *-y* usually predominates over *-ie*, except when usage is clearly against it; *-ie* is often the singular termination for words usually used in the plural; and in personal nicknames, *-ie* is often considered more feminine. But I saw none of these patterns among ethnic nicknames. About half ended in *-y* and about half in *-ie*.

Other Conventions. Users of the list in chapter 3 will be helped by a brief explanation of my other conventions, which vary from those of most dictionaries. First of all, terms are not labeled "obsolescent" or "obsolete," because the fact that they were current for a time in the past is the criterion of inclusion, not their status today. Most of these nicknames are obsolescent to obsolete, though I am impressed with how many are still to be heard. Reader recognition of a term and impressions of its currency may be as good as any measure of its vitality.

Most ethnic nicknames occur as single words, and as nouns. Some occur as nouns qualified with adjectives, such as *white-*, *black-*, *yellow-*, *dirty-*, *stinking-*, *bastard-*, and *slimey-*. Compound phrases are always hyphenated to emphasize that those particular elements are usually paired. Many other compound phrases are omitted because they repeat terms already listed as one word. Some compound phrases are subordinated as variants. A few especially common ones are included as separate items.

All terms are entered in the singular, though many usually occur in the plural. If for this reason an entry sounds unnatural, then add an *s*. Entering all items in the singular avoids deciding which ones usually occur in the plural and avoids using space-consuming devices such as *(s)*'s. All nick-

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names for ethnic groups can and often do take the plural, which indicates that they are—and are used as—common nouns. In the strictest sense a proper noun cannot take the plural. In actual use, the initials of many terms are regularly capitalized as though proper nouns. I have seen little consistency in capitalizing the initial letter. It varies from source to source, from time to time, and with custom. These terms are not the proper names for the groups and thus they are not proper nouns, properly speaking (Algeo 1973).

Also to save space, I have not shown in the annotations page numbers for dictionaries and other such sources that are alphabetized or indexed by term. An author citation with no publication date simply means the author appears only once in the References section at the back of the book. Phrases beginning with "or" introduce alternative spellings; "also" introduces variants, cognates, and compounds not different enough to list as separate items.

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