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*White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian  
Acculturation* (review)

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## White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation

by Jacqueline Fear-Segal  
University of Nebraska Press, 2007

Jacqueline Fear-Segal's *White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* analyzes the "foundation years of the Indian school system, 1875–1900" through the lenses of race relations to sustain the claim that Indian education aimed at the racial formation of Indian students as nonwhites (xviii). Grounded in theories of domination of subordinate groups, power relations, and nationalism derived from James C. Scott, Michel Foucault, and Benedict Anderson, this work considers how a discourse of race played a fundamental role in the shaping of Indian education and how Indian students' lives were impacted by it. The author focuses on the educational philosophies of Samuel Armstrong and Richard Pratt and their relation to contemporary attitudes toward race to unveil the racial agenda imprinted in the day-to-day practices of the pioneering institutions they directed, Hampton and Carlisle. The author's main argument is that Indian schools, including Carlisle, did not prepare children for entering U.S. society on an equal footing with whites but, rather, for racial segregation.

The narrative of the book runs from a macro level of nineteenth-century theories of race and Indian education to a few micro histories of Carlisle students, which, reconstructed through published records, illuminate the endurance of native cultures to this day. In between, the reader is informed about indigenous educational practices and perspectives on schooling; mission schools and the shift to a centralized government system, as exemplified by the Santee Normal Training School in the Dakota Mission; Hampton and the social evolutionary character of its curriculum; the bicultural life of Thomas Alford, a Hampton graduate; and finally Carlisle, its universalist intent, and the many contradictions that spoke of a racial agenda embedded in this "Americanizing" institution, particularly the spatial layout of the campus, the Indian cemetery, and the publication *Indian Helper*. The book poignantly concludes with "Powwow 2000: Remembering the Carlisle Indian School," an event that, for the first time in over one hundred years, brought hundreds of Native Americans once more to Carlisle; this time to pay tribute, honor, and remember the lives of those who attended it.

One of the strengths of this book is the use of photographs, maps, school buildings, and "structure and circulation elements (roads, paths, fences, entrances, and exits)" as primary sources for spatial analysis (xviii). Examined with methods derived from landscape history and human geography, they provide new insights into the hidden

agenda built into the physical environment of schools. For example, in chapter 3, "Mission Schools of the West: Precursors of a System," the author discusses how the design of the Santee Normal Training School testified to its religious agenda. The chapel, the tallest of all the school buildings, was erected in the middle of the campus and was visible from every corner of the school, while the other main buildings, including the flagstaff, were positioned behind it. These arrangements, the author states, reflected the school's philosophy and mission to educate Dakota children first as Christians and second as Americans.

Spatial analysis is also used to expose Carlisle philosophy of racial separation. In "Carlisle Campus: Landscape of Race and Erasure," one of the most captivating chapters of the book, the author meticulously scrutinizes the school's location, perimeter, lanes, gate houses, fences, and the position of student/staff accommodation buildings, in order to unveil a "staged authenticity" and a complex web of "negotiation and accommodation" that "belie[s] the simplicity of Carlisle's stated mission" (184–85). In fact, while Captain Pratt publicly proclaimed his belief in the ability of educated Indians to compete with white Americans, his school delivered a clear message of white power and Indian submission. The out-of-sight location of the Indian school, the modesty and spatial distribution of the buildings, and the presence of its own cemetery were to reassure Carlisle citizens that Indian students were not trained to become their equals. These elements are, according to the author, clear evidence of the racial attitudes embedded in the spatiality of the school.

Throughout the book, Fear-Segal highlights "the input and response of Indian people to the workings of a system dedicated to their transformation" (xvi) by piecing together different sources, such as official school records, reports, letters, school publications, photographs, local newspapers, biographies, gravestones, literary works, and Web sites. This multiplicity of sources can better testify to how students contested, challenged, accepted, and appropriated government educational policies. For example, to illuminate Tom Alford's life, the author uses his letters, his autobiography, and the school publication *Southern Workman*. Taken together, these sources allow a better understanding of the private man, Thomas Alford, versus the public one, a Hampton-educated Indian, and the complexities of living as an American and a Shawnee. A similar use of composite sources—student records, Carlisle's *Indian Helper*, the published writings of Leslie Marmon Silko—sheds more light on the life of Susie Rayos Marmon and her ability to use "the power of the white man's wisdom" (297) to help her own people.

The commentaries of Man-on-the-Bandstand, the imaginary editor of *Indian Helper*, are used to extrapolate students' responses to the Carlisle program and expose, for the first time, the experiences of those who did not leave behind any written record. Man-on-the-Bandstand is

an omnipresent surveillant whose goal is to change children's behavior and "inner voice of conscience" (219) from the pages of the publication. Children's reactions to his presence are largely unknown because they were not recorded directly by them but can be interpreted from the subtle admonitions and reproaches of Man-on-the-Bandstand. According to the author, in fact, his "constant complaints and lists of infractions" (223) reveal that students did disobey the rules (for example, did not march at tempo with the piano while exiting the chapel, walked on the grass, stole apples), found moments for speaking their native language, and even ran away. While personal accounts are missing, students' experiences can be inferred through a reading of the existing documents. For this analytical work, Fear-Segal certainly deserves praise. At the same time, however, she seems to make generalizations that should be cautioned precisely because of the lack of records by students. While it is undeniable that children found ingenious ways of responding to schools' oppressive environments, as numerous other scholars have documented, the author seems to read the reports of the *Indian Helper* with an assumption of uniformity of children's experiences. This erases individual differences and the unique way in which each student learned to cope with the new environment.

*White Man's Club* is a well-constructed and well-researched book that originally uses primary sources to unveil the covert agenda of race subjugation and control in the government schooling system and its impact on students' lives. By re-piecing together fragments of written records, Fear-Segal brilliantly brings back to light a fundamental chapter of Indian history that broadens our understanding of Indian-white relations: boarding schools and their legacy. This work makes important contributions to American Indian Studies, particularly for those interested in the history of American Indian education and race relations.

REVIEW ESSAY by David R. M. Beck

## **Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty**

by Daniel M. Cobb  
University Press of Kansas, 2008

Daniel M. Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* reimagines and redefines the academy's understanding of Indian activism in the postwar era. This book is an argument against the historical profession's "tendency to fixate on AIM," the American Indian Movement. Cobb tells us he is attempting to "decenter and resituate [AIM] within a larger context of Native political action." In doing so he does not desire to