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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Native American Studies. By Clara Sue Kidwell and Alan Velie.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1zh407rg>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 30(2)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2006-03-01

DOI

10.17953

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But it seems to me that Willy wrote the diary more to help her preserve her impressions and memories of the trip, and perhaps to share with her closest friends. Eggermont-Molenaar also unconvincingly suggests that Willy transcended some of the practices of the period that are now embarrassing and offensive. For example, she discusses the grave digging that anthropologists sometimes engaged in. Eggermont-Molenaar writes that when she wrote of seeing open graves Willy “stressed that she didn’t take anything with her,” and concludes that “it certainly looks as if Willy disapproved of these practices!” In fact, on 25 June Willy saw open graves and wrote “we don’t dare take anything with us. . . . And yet we want to do so very much as a souvenir of this morning. . . . [W]e want to but dare not take anything with us” (66). Willy never did take any bones, but in August she wrote that “finding a few strings of bead, a few bracelets beside a grave I pick these up & take them with me to Holland” (170). It seems that Willy and her husband were more representative of their times than the editor suggests.

Two other chapters by Inge and Kehoe assess the legacy of Uhlenbeck’s work on the Blackfeet. They are interesting and dispassionate assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of Uhlenbeck’s work. The complete English texts of Uhlenbeck’s *Original Blackfoot Texts* (1911) and *New Series of Blackfoot Texts* (1912) follow. These texts are rearranged so that they are in the order Eggermont-Molenaar judged they were most likely to have been collected. Thus, they are intended to parallel entries in Willy’s diary. The appendices consist of “Patronymics and Proper Names of the Peigans,” an English translation of a 1911 article by Uhlenbeck; a reprint of de Josselin de Jong’s “Social Organization of the Southern Peigans” (1912); and a translation of de Josselin de Jong’s “Dansen der Peigans” (1912).

In sum, although this book will have only a small audience of researchers, it makes various primary sources widely accessible for the first time, and provides English translations of some old anthropological literature hitherto only available in Dutch.

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Native American Studies. By Clara Sue Kidwell and Alan Velie. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. 160 pages. \$19.95 paper.

Clara Sue Kidwell and Alan Velie draw from their many years of experience in academia and produce a very readable and interesting book. The book is supposed to serve as an introduction to contemporary Native American Studies. The question is how is one properly introduced to Native American Studies? Kidwell and Velie claim that in order to study Native Americans properly one must embrace a fundamentally different set of assumptions, or premises, about Native American issues and identity. These premises “constitute a different epistemology for understanding Native people and Native communities in contemporary society” (11). They list and devote a chapter

to each of the five premises: the significance of land, historical agency, tribal sovereignty, the significance of language, and the role of an indigenous aesthetics (which is divided into literature and art and expressive culture). The final chapter addresses the contemporary state of Native American Studies in the United States. Although I think Kidwell and Velie have cited many important problems and, to a certain extent, lay out an intellectual landscape, or context, from which to situate them, they fail to present an argument for *why* these premises push Native American Studies into a new “epistemological” paradigm *within contemporary academia*.

The central problem with their book is that although their assumptions may function unproblematically within Native American ways of knowing the world, these assumptions do not do the same kind of philosophical work within contemporary academia. These assumptions ought to be contested within the evolving discipline of Native American Studies. In other words, they do not function as assumptions; rather they ought to constitute the subject matter of and, in a sense, define the boundaries of complex and ongoing intellectual debates within Native American Studies.

Kidwell and Velie’s book can be read in two ways. The first is to read the book as a descriptive and informative introduction to Native American Studies. The book provides the reader with a remarkable amount of valuable information about contemporary Native American issues. In addition, the sources and the “Suggestions for Further Reading” in the appendix make this book especially useful for anyone who is not familiar with the field. If the purpose of the volume is to provide a short, largely informative, and descriptive summary of the current state of Native American Studies, then the volume can be viewed a success. The second is to read the book and view it not only as informative, but also as prescriptive. That is, Kidwell and Velie presume to present a new and improved “epistemology” that can intellectually invigorate the stagnant Eurocentric methodologies currently defining Native American Studies.

Kidwell and Velie’s approach raises larger issues in contemporary Native American Studies. Their normative language is asserted (in the form of assumptions) and therefore not up for negotiation and this essentially renders their view immune from criticism. This means that they do not have to do the difficult philosophical work required to defend what ought to be conclusions to complex investigations.

The first premise states that “land is the basic source of American Indian identity” (21). Kidwell and Velie claim that American Indians have distinctive (even unique) ways of knowing the world that include “dreams, vision quests, and initiation rites” (28). These different ways of knowing give access to dimensions of reality, and therefore knowledge, that Western Europeans are not able to access. Understanding the spiritual dimension in particular requires one to possess a unique form of power and to use it in the right way. To complicate matters, in order to address the fact that many American Indians do not live on their homelands and therefore no longer have an “intimate relationship” with their homelands, they claim that “the memory of that relationship still persists as part of tribal identity.” What this means for Native

American Studies, Kidwell and Velie claim, is that in order to understand Native sources of identity one must understand the relationships indigenous peoples have with the world—in the way *they* understand the world.

The second premise “is that the cultural contact between Indians and Europeans must be seen from the perspectives of both sides” (41). Historical scholarship must assume that American Indians are “active agents in their history, not simply passive victims or obstacles to someone else’s progress” (42). Secondly, historical scholarship must incorporate indigenous oral histories as legitimate sources of knowledge. If taken seriously, this change in attitude could undermine much of the Eurocentric scholarship that presently dominates contemporary professional history.

The third premise claims that “sovereignty is a basic concept for Native American Studies, and the unique, fiduciary responsibility that the United States has toward Indian tribes is an essential aspect of political identity for Indian people in the United States today” (61–62). One of the central tasks of Native American Studies, then, is to explain the meaning of the political relationship and its legal and political consequences for Indian tribes.

The fourth premise “is that language is key to understanding Native world views” (83). Native languages are fundamentally different from European languages and therefore produce different ways of knowing the world. But there is a causal relationship between epistemology and Native “ways of knowing.” Kidwell and Velie state that “[language] is an important epistemological tool for understanding Native ways of knowing” (89). In addition, they go on to discuss the reality that Native languages have been under threat for a long time and many communities are being proactive about revitalizing their languages, which in turn represents an important form of political empowerment.

Premise five, Kidwell and Velie’s understanding of Indian aesthetics (Native American literature, art, and other expressive culture), is grounded in indigenous ways of knowing the world. In other words, Indian aesthetics is rooted in culturally specific practices: relationship to land, connection to tribal traditions, relationship to nature in particular and animals in general, and the cyclical nature of time (123).

In the final chapter Kidwell and Velie attempt to situate their assumptions within the academic discipline of Native American Studies. They claim that the premises are not meant to function separately but must be woven together to generate a more holistic view of Native American cultural life. Their main concern about contemporary academia, and consequently Native American Studies’ place in it, is “the issue of scholarly objectivity versus advocacy” (136). The three “traditional” disciplines on which they focused their discussion—anthropology, literature (including literary criticism), and history—have no doubt serious methodological problems incorporating Native American perspectives. The problem that Kidwell and Velie do not seriously consider is that anthropology, literature, and history are not the only disciplines that affect the methodologies of Native American Studies. By demanding a new epistemology one is raising *philosophical* differences between Native American ways of thinking about the world and Western European modes of thought. Navigating one’s way through this ethnophilosophical landscape remains a

largely unexplored intellectual territory in both indigenous and nonindigenous intellectual communities.

The tricky part of their discussion is that their assumptions make sense, especially to most Native American scholars. Despite this I believe that Kidwell and Velie have not gone far enough in defending the integrity of Native American ways of understanding the world *in mainstream academia*. Their indigenous-centric assumptions are articulated in English and asserted within a framework that uncritically privileges a Western European philosophical tradition. It should be pointed out here that this criticism is highly contentious and ought to be a central debate in Native American Studies. The “new” epistemology that they hope will evolve out of using their assumptions instead of the Eurocentric ones embraced by the traditional disciplines is based on the hope that academia can evolve and justly incorporate Native American voices. However, the normative language they use to assert these claims is not up for negotiation. The result is that they do not generate a sound argument grounded on assumptions that they show to be true (or *can* show to be true). Rather, their assumptions are left hanging in the air without supporting reasons that explain why we ought to believe them to be true. As it turns out, providing these reasons proves to be an enormously difficult and complex problem in contemporary Native American Studies.

For example, they claim that “land, by which we mean the totality of the physical environment in which indigenous people live, is the ultimate source of spiritual power” (11). For Kidwell and Velie, the term *spiritual power* plays a significant role in defending an indigenous view of “land,” and for many Native Americans it does so effectively. In other words, the term can be used appropriately within a particular *kind* of discussion. But if it is to be used in a discussion about the meaning of, for example, property in a court of law, then, as indigenous peoples have come to know only too well, it is doomed to be either ridiculed, deemed irrational, or simply ignored (or all three). How to justly use a concept such as spiritual power and weave it into the intellectual practices of academia is the responsibility of a contemporary Native American Studies intellectual culture. Kidwell and Velie do not consider that their assumptions must be evaluated within this broader, more sophisticated, intellectual context. We are only beginning to discover and appreciate the enormous task that faces us to produce Native intellectuals who possess the forms of knowledge and critical skills required for asserting and defending indigenous normative language in mainstream intellectual culture.

Despite this lacuna, Kidwell and Velie’s book is useful in that it represents a call to so-called well-educated Indians who believe that a diploma gives them license to lay claim to the necessary critical skills that protect and assert tribal ways of knowing within a perpetually hostile dominant intellectual culture. Whether Native American Studies can awaken from these colonial slumbers remains to be seen.

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