### Indians K

#### One morning on a cold day in Minnesota on the [Anishinaabe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anishinaabe) reservation, Winona Laduke was reported dead. It was fitting her death in part because it was in the ultimate resistance that she embodied, Winona lived on a reservation that embodied one tenth of what it originally was and spent her whole life fighting to right the wrongs that had been done to her and her people. In her struggle a life was lost to the embattlement of colonialism. Winona was a celebrated writer, activist, and former vice presidential candidate for the Green Party she founded Honor the earth in the hopes of helping her people. She was more than the “savage beaver woman from Minnesota” that some said she was, she was a person. There is not much to categorize the life that Winona had other than her own explanation, it was filled with ethnostress. All throughout life she could not go a day without it, “That’s what you feel when you wake up in the morning and you are still Indian, and you still have to deal with stuff about being Indian—poverty, racism, death, the government, and strip mining. You can’t just hit the tennis courts, have lunch, and forget about it. You still have to go home.” Even in death she won’t escape being somewhere that is held in trust by the federal government and near pollutants and harmful chemicals, her grave will be washed in the tarnished waters of colonialism.

#### The 1AC’s response to the issue of death remains profoundly silent on the question of who died to give Kaine and Garreth the opportunity to speak. America’s existence is contingent upon a continuing legacy of colonization that guarantees continued international exploitation and environmental degradation.

Churchill 96 [Ward, native prodigy, *From a Native Son: Selected Essays in Indigenism, 1985-1995*, isbn: 0896085538, pg. 520-525]-Avery/AC

I’ll debunk some of this nonsense in a moment, but first I want to take up the posture of self-proclaimed leftist radicals in the same connection. And I’ll do so on the basis of principle, because justice is supposed to matter more to progressives than to rightwing hacks. Let me say that the pervasive and near-total silence of the Left in this connection has been quite illuminating. Non-Indian activists, with only a handful of exceptions, persistently plead that they can’t really take a coherent position on the matter of Indian land rights because “unfortunately,” they’re “not really conversant with the issues” (as if these were tremendously complex). Meanwhile, they do virtually nothing, generation after generation, to inform themselves on the topic of who actually owns the ground they’re standing on. The record can be played only so many times before it wears out and becomes just another variation of “hear no evil, see no evil.” At this point, it doesn’t take Albert Einstein to figure out that the Left doesn’t know much about such things because it’s never wanted to know, or that this is so because it’s always had its own plans for utilizing land it has no more right to than does the status quo it claims to oppose. The usual technique for explaining this away has always been a sort of pro forma acknowledgement that Indian land rights are of course “really important stuff” (yawn), but that one really doesn’t have a lot of time to get into it (I’ll buy your book, though, and keep it on my shelf, even if I never read it). Reason? Well, one is just “overwhelmingly preoccupied” with working on “other important issues” (meaning, what they consider to be more important issues). Typically enumerated are sexism, racism, homophobia, class inequities, militarism, the environment, or some combination of these. It’s a pretty good evasion, all in all. Certainly, there’s no denying any of these issues their due; they are all important, obviously so. But more important than the question of land rights? There are some serious problems of primacy and priority imbedded in the orthodox script. To frame things clearly in this regard, let’s hypothesize for a moment that all of the various non-Indian movements concentrating on each of these issues were suddenly successful in accomplishing their objectives. Let’s imagine that the United States as a whole were somehow transformed into an entity defined by the parity of its race, class, and gender relations, its embrace of unrestricted sexual preference, its rejection of militarism in all forms, and its abiding concern with environmental protection (I know, I know, this is a sheer impossibility, but that’s my point). When all is said and done, the society resulting from this scenario is still, first and foremost, a colonialist society, an imperialist society in the most fundamental sense possible with all that this implies. This is true because the scenario does nothing at all to address the fact that whatever is happening happens on someone else’s land, not only without their consent, but through an adamant disregard for their rights to the land. Hence, all it means is that the immigrant or invading population has rearranged its affairs in such a way as to make itself more comfortable at the continuing expense of indigenous people. The colonial equation remains intact and may even be reinforced by a greater degree of participation, and vested interest in maintenance of the colonial order among the settler population at large. The dynamic here is not very different from that evident in the American Revolution of the late 18th century, is it? And we all know very well where that led, don’t we? Should we therefore begin to refer to socialist imperialism, feminist imperialism, gay and lesbian imperialism, environmental imperialism, African American, and la Raza imperialism? I would hope not. I would hope this is all just a matter of confusion, of muddled priorities among people who really do mean well and who’d like to do better. If so, then all that is necessary to correct the situation is a basic rethinking of what must be done, and in what order. Here, I’d advance the straightforward premise that the land rights of “First Americans” should serve as a first priority for everyone seriously committed to accomplishing positive change in North America. But before I suggest everyone jump off and adopt this priority, I suppose it’s only fair that I interrogate the converse of the proposition: if making things like class inequity and sexism the preeminent focus of progressive action in North America inevitably perpetuates the internal colonial structure of the United States, does the reverse hold true? I’ll state unequivocally that it does not. There is no indication whatsoever that a restoration of indigenous sovereignty in Indian Country would foster class stratification anywhere, least of all in Indian Country. In fact, all indications are that when left to their own devices, indigenous peoples have consistently organized their societies in the most class-free manners. Look to the example of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy). Look to the Muscogee (Creek) Confederacy. Look to the confederations of the Yaqui and the Lakota, and those pursued and nearly perfected by Pontiac and Tecumseh. They represent the very essence of enlightened egalitarianism and democracy. Every imagined example to the contrary brought forth by even the most arcane anthropologist can be readily offset by a couple of dozen other illustrations along the lines of those I just mentioned. Would sexism be perpetuated? Ask one of the Haudenosaunee clan mothers, who continue to assert political leadership in their societies through the present day. Ask Wilma Mankiller, current head of the Cherokee nation, a people that traditionally led by what were called “Beloved Women.” Ask a Lakota woman—or man, for that matter—about who it was that owned all real property in traditional society, and what that meant in terms of parity in gender relations. Ask a traditional Navajo grandmother about her social and political role among her people. Women in most traditional native societies not only enjoyed political, social, and economic parity with men, they often held a preponderance of power in one or more of these spheres. Homophobia? Homosexuals of both genders were (and in many settings still are) deeply revered as special or extraordinary, and therefore spiritually significant, within most indigenous North American cultures. The extent to which these realities do not now pertain in native societies is exactly the extent to which Indians have been subordinated to the mores of the invading, dominating culture. Insofar as restoration of Indian land rights is tied directly to the reconstitution of traditional indigenous social, political, and economic modes, you can see where this leads: the relations of sex and sexuality accord rather well with the aspirations of feminist and gay rights activism. How about a restoration of native land rights precipitating some sort of “environmental holocaust”? Let’s get at least a little bit real here. If you’re not addicted to the fabrications of Smithsonian anthropologists about how Indians lived, or George Weurthner’s Eurosupremacist Earth First! Fantasies about how we beat all the wooly mammoths and mastodons and saber-toothed cats to death with sticks, then this question isn’t even on the board. I know it’s become fashionable among Washington Post editorialists to make snide references to native people “strewing refuse in their wake” as they wandered nomadically about the “prehistoric” North American landscape. What is that supposed to imply? That we, who were mostly “sedentary agriculturalists” in any event. We’re dropping plastic and aluminum cans as we went? Like I said, let’s get real. Read the accounts of early European arrival, despite the fact that it had been occupied by 15 or 20 million people enjoying a remarkably high standard of living for nobody knows how long: 40,000 years? 50,000 years? Longer? Now contrast that reality to what’s been done to this continent over the past couple of hundred years by the culture Weurthner, the Smithsonian, and the Post represent, and you tell me about environmental devastation. That leaves militarism and racism. Taking the last first, there really is no indication of racism in traditional Indian societies. To the contrary, the record reveals that Indians habitually intermarried between groups, and frequently adopted both children and adults from other groups. This occurred in precontact times between Indians, and the practice was broadened to include those of both African and European origin—and ultimately Asian origin as well—once contact occurred. Those who were naturalized by marriage or adoption were considered members of the group, pure and simple. This was always the Indian view. The Europeans and subsequent Euroamerican settlers viewed things rather differently, however, and foisted off the notion that Indian identity should be determined primarily by “blood quantum,” an outright eugenics code similar to those developed in places like Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa. Now that’s a racist construction if there ever was one. Unfortunately, a lot of Indians have been conned into buying into this antiIndian absurdity, and that’s something to be overcome. But there’s also solid indication that quite a number of native people continue to strongly resist such things as the quantum system. As to militarism, no one will deny that Indians fought wars among themselves both before and after the European invasion began. Probably half of all indigenous peoples in North America maintained permanent warrior societies. This could perhaps be reasonably construed as “militarism,” but not, I think, with the sense the term conveys within the European/Euro-American tradition. There were never, so far as anyone can demonstrate, wars of annihilation fought in this hemisphere prior to the Columbian arrival, none. In fact, it seems that it was a more or less firm principle of indigenous warfare not to kill, the object being to demonstrate personal bravery, something that could be done only against a live opponent. There’s no honor to be had in killing another person, because a dead person can’t hurt you. There’s no risk. This is not to say that nobody ever died or was seriously injured in the fighting. They were, just as they are in full contact contemporary sports like football and boxing. Actually, these kinds of Euro-American games are what I would take to be the closest modern parallels to traditional inter-Indian warfare. For Indians, it was a way of burning excess testosterone out of young males, and not much more. So, militarism in the way the term is used today is as alien to native tradition as smallpox and atomic bombs. Not only is it perfectly reasonable to assert that a restoration of Indian control over unceded lands within the United States would do nothing to perpetuate such problems as sexism and classism, but the reconstitution of indigenous societies this would entail stands to free the affected portions of North America from such maladies altogether. Moreover, it can be said that the process should have a tangible impact in terms of diminishing such oppressions elsewhere. The principle is this: sexism, racism, and all the rest arose here as a concomitant to the emergence and consolidation of the Eurocentric nation-state form of sociopolitical and economic organization. Everything the state does, everything it can do, is entirely contingent on its maintaining its internal cohesion, a cohesion signified above all by its pretended territorial integrity, its ongoing domination of Indian Country. Given this, it seems obvious that the literal dismemberment of the nation-state inherent to Indian land recovery correspondingly reduces the ability of the state to sustain the imposition of objectionable relations within itself. It follows that realization of indigenous land rights serves to undermine or destroy the ability of the status quo to continue imposing a racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, militaristic order on non-Indians.

#### American Indian identity is rooted in the struggle for sovereignty- their problemization of metanarratives overblur cultural lines and fail to grasp the vital aspects of American Indian identity

Grande 00 QUALITATIVE STUDIES IN EDUCATION, 2000, VOL. 13, NO. 4, 343–359 American Indian identity and intellectualism: the quest for a new red pedagogy SANDY GRANDE Colby College, Waterville, ME

Postmodern theorists critique essentialist constructions of race (and other identity categories) and, instead, maintain that ‘‘ identity ’’ is shaped and determined by social and historical contingencies and not by some checklist of innate, biological, or primordial characteristics (DeLaurentis, 1989). Identity is, in other words, viewed as a highly relative construct acting out within a broader reality that resembles ‘‘a theater of simulation marked by the free play of images, disembodied signifiers and, the heterogeneity of differences ’’ (Ebert, 1991, p. 15). Within this context, empiricist notions of knowable and absolute determiners of origin and authenticity dissolve and along with them, essentialist constructions of identity. In short, it asserts the ‘‘postmodern condition ’’ as one in which grand narratives of legitimization are no longer credible. As such, it appears that postmodernism provides a theoretical pathway out of the illogic of essentialism, however, the attack on grand narrative or totality is not without its drawbacks. Postmodernist constructions of identity as ‘‘ free-floating ’’ can result in an overblurring of boundaries, and its categorical rejection of grand narratives fails to distinguish the critical difference between master narratives of oppression and formative narratives that provide the basis for historically and relationally situating different groups within some common project (McLaren & Giroux, 1997). This aspect of postmodernist discourse not only reflects ‘‘an ontological agnosticism’’ that relinquishes the primacy of social transformation but also encourages a ‘‘ epistemological relativism that calls for a tolerance for a range of meanings without advocating any single one of them ’’ (McLaren, 1998, p. 242). Such nihilistic tendencies present a real and significant threat to American Indian communities struggling to define their sociopolitical relationship to the United States. Unlike other subjugated groups, struggling to define their own local narratives within the democratic project, American Indians have not been working toward greater inclusion in the democratic imaginary but, rather, have been engaged in a centuries long struggle for the recognition of their sovereignty. This particular aspect of the Indigenous struggle completely transforms and reframes the identity question, moving it from the superficial realm of cultural politics to the more profound arena of cultural survival.

#### We must include indigenous forms of knowledge and examine how these forms of knowledge are excluded from everyday practices is key to ending our own complicity in oppression- this solves their arguments about metanarratives

Kincheloe 07Joe Canada Research Chair of Critical Pedagogy at McGill University “Critical Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: Evolution for Survival,” Critical Pedagogy: Where are we now, p 29

Picking up on Wexler's theoretical move, I attempt to contribute to the canon of a transformative ideological education by bringing previously referenced subjugated and indigenous know ledges to the pedagogical table. Derived from dangerous memories of history that have been suppressed and information that has been disqualified by social and academic gatekeepers, subjugated and indigenous knowledges play an important role in a critical pedagogy concerned with the way dominant power inculcates ideology in the contemporary era. Through the conscious cultivation of these "low-ranking" knowledges, alternative democratic and emancipatory visions of society, politics, cognition, and social education are possible. The subjugated knowledge of Africans, indigenous peoples from around the world, women in diverse cultural contexts, working-class people, and many other groups have contested the dominant culture's view of reality. At the very least, such subjugated know ledges inform students operating within mainstream schools and society that there are multiple perspectives on all issues. A critical pedagogy that includes subjugated ways of seeing teaches a lesson on the complexities of knowledge production and how this process shapes our view of ourselves and the world around us. Individuals from dominant social formations have rarely understood (or cared to understand) how they look to marginalized others. As a result, women often make sense of men's view of women better than men understand women's view of men; individuals from Africa, or with African heritages, understand the motivations of White people better than the reverse; and low-status workers figure out how they are seen by their managers more clearly than the managers understand how they appear to workers. Obviously, such insights provide critical pedagogues and their students with a very different view of the world and the processes that shape it. Critical educators who employ such subjugated viewpoints become transformative agents who alert the community to its hidden features, its submerged memories, and in the process help specific individuals to name their oppression or possibly understand their complicity in oppression.

#### Decolonization must be at the forefront of all activities- failure to do so dehumanizes all involved

McCaslin and Breton 08 Wanda D. Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Research Officer with the Native Law Centre of Canada, Denise C. founder and executive director of Living Justice Press, “Justice as healing: Going outside the colonizer’s cage,” ,” Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies, pp 513

First, decolonization is critical for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples need to know our own decolonizing pathways, and to do this, we must reclaim our ways of knowing how to be in good relationships. This is not easy, simple, or quick since many of us have become too comfortable with the colonizers' methodologies. Instead, we need to decolonize the positivistic regimes and remember our traditional healing ways of remedying conflicts. In decolonizing approaches, we must always ask ourselves whether our cultural integrity is being promoted, respected, and honored. Anything less will not be decolonizing. In addition, colonizers need to learn the ways of decolonization that teach respect and the honoring of all relationships. What is destructive and catastrophic to the well-being of one cannot be good for the other. To dehumanize others can only dehumanize the dehumanizers, the controllers, the ones who treat others as objects and benefit materially from doing so. Not only that, but colonizers almost immediately start treating themselves as objects as well-objects that are judged successful or not, objects that command high or low salaries, objects that hold high or low positions in hierarchical societies. We who are White, who are colonizers, desperately need decolonization too.

#### The alternative is to embrace the call for impossible realism of US off the planet as a first priority. In order to call for liberation from the colonial yoke of Imperialist thought, we must start with the decolonizing of our own minds. It is the call to return the land which allows for the imagining of liberation of those who fall victim to the illegally occupied power of the US. Any form of social change is impossible in a world in which we allow for the colonization of Natives to continue.

Churchill 96 [Ward, native prodigy, *From a Native Son: Selected Essays in Indigenism, 1985-1995*, isbn: 0896085538, pg. 84-89]-Avery/AC

The question which inevitably arises with regard to indigenous land claims, especially in the United States, is whether they are “realistic.” The answer, of course is, “No, they aren’t.” Further, no form of decolonization has ever been realistic when viewed within the construct of a colonialist paradigm. It wasn’t realistic at the time to expect George Washington’s rag-tag militia to defeat the British military during the American Revolution. Just ask the British. It wasn’t realistic, as the French could tell you, that the Vietnamese should be able to defeat U.S.-backed France in 1954, or that the Algerians would shortly be able to follow in their footsteps. Surely, it wasn’t reasonable to predict that Fidel Castro’s pitiful handful of guerillas would overcome Batista’s regime in Cuba, another U.S. client, after only a few years in the mountains. And the Sandinistas, to be sure, had no prayer of attaining victory over Somoza 20 years later. Henry Kissinger, among others, knew that for a fact. The point is that in each case, in order to begin their struggles at all, anti-colonial fighters around the world have had to abandon orthodox realism in favor of what they knew to be right. To paraphrase Bendit, they accepted as their agenda, a redefinition of reality in terms deemed quite impossible within the conventional wisdom of their oppressors. And in each case, they succeeded in their immediate quest for liberation. The fact that all but one (Cuba) of the examples used subsequently turned out to hold colonizing pretensions of its own does not alter the truth of this—or alter the appropriateness of their efforts to decolonize themselves—in the least. It simply means that decolonization has yet to run its course, that much remains to be done. The battles waged by native nations in North America to free themselves, and the lands upon which they depend for ongoing existence as discernible peoples, from the grip of U.S. (and Canadian) internal colonialism are plainly part of this process of liberation. Given that their very survival depends upon their perseverance in the face of all apparent odds, American Indians have no real alternative but to carry on. They must struggle, and where there is struggle here is always hope. Moreover, the unrealistic or “romantic” dimensions of our aspiration to quite literally dismantle the territorial corpus of the U.S. state begin to erode when one considers that federal domination of Native North America is utterly contingent upon maintenance of a perceived confluence of interests between prevailing governmental/corporate elites and common non-Indian citizens. Herein lies the prospect of long-term success. It is entirely possible that the consensus of opinion concerning non-Indian “rights” to exploit the land and resources of indigenous nations can be eroded, and that large numbers of non-Indians will join in the struggle to decolonize Native North America. Few non-Indians wish to identify with or defend the naziesque characteristics of US history. To the contrary most seek to deny it in rather vociferous fashion. All things being equal, they are uncomfortable with many of the resulting attributes of federal postures and actively oppose one or more of these, so long as such politics do not intrude into a certain range of closely guarded self-interests. This is where the crunch comes in the realm of Indian rights issues. Most non-Indians (of all races and ethnicities, and both genders) have been indoctrinated to believe the officially contrived notion that, in the event “the Indians get their land back,” or even if the extent of present federal domination is relaxed, native people will do unto their occupiers exactly as has been done to them; mass dispossession and eviction of non-Indians, especially Euro-Americans is expected to ensue. Hence even progressives who are most eloquently inclined to condemn US imperialism abroad and/or the functions of racism and sexism at home tend to deliver a blank stare or profess open “disinterest” when indigenous land rights are mentioned. Instead of attempting to come to grips with this most fundamental of all issues the more sophisticated among them seek to divert discussions into “higher priority” or “more important” topics like “issues of class and gender equality” in which “justice” becomes synonymous with a redistribution of power and loot deriving from the occupation of Native North America even while occupation continues. Sometimes, Indians are even slated to receive “their fair share” in the division of spoils accruing from expropriation of their resources. Always, such things are couched in terms of some “greater good” than decolonizing the .6 percent of the U.S. population which is indigenous. Some Marxist and environmentalist groups have taken the argument so far as to deny that Indians possess any rights distinguishable from those of their conquerors. AIM leader Russell Means snapped the picture into sharp focus when he observed in 1987 that: so-called progressives in the United States claiming that Indians are obligated to give up their rights because a much larger group of non-Indians “need” their resources is exactly the same as Ronald Reagan and Elliot Abrams asserting that the rights of 250 million North Americans outweigh the rights of a couple million Nicaraguans. Leaving aside the pronounced and pervasive hypocrisy permeating these positions, which add up to a phenomenon elsewhere described as “settler state colonialism,” the fact is that the specter driving even most radical non-Indians into lockstep with the federal government on questions of native land rights is largely illusory. The alternative reality posed by native liberation struggles is actually much different: While government propagandists are wont to trumpet—as they did during the Maine and Black Hills land disputes of the 1970s—that an Indian win would mean individual non-Indian property owners losing everything, the native position has always been the exact opposite. Overwhelmingly, the lands sought for actual recovery have been governmentally and corporately held. Eviction of small land owners has been pursued only in instances where they have banded together—as they have during certain of the Iroquois claims cases—to prevent Indians from recovering any land at all, and to otherwise deny native rights. Official sources contend this is inconsistent with the fact that all non-Indian title to any portion of North America could be called into question. Once “the dike is breached,” they argue, it’s just a matter of time before “everybody has to start swimming back to Europe, or Africa or wherever.” Although there is considerable technical accuracy to admissions that all non-Indian title to North America is illegitimate, Indians have by and large indicated they would be content to honor the cession agreements entered into by their ancestors, even though the United States has long since defaulted. This would leave somewhere close to two-thirds of the continental United States in non-Indian hands, with the real rather than pretended consent of native people. The remaining one-third, the areas delineated in Map II to which the United States never acquired title at all would be recovered by its rightful owners. The government holds that even at that there is no longer sufficient land available for unceded lands, or their equivalent, to be returned. In fact, the government itself still directly controls more than one-third of the total U.S. land area, about 770 million acres. Each of the states also “owns” large tracts, totaling about 78 million acres. It is thus quite possible—and always has been—for all native claims to be met in full without the loss to non-Indians of a single acre of privately held land. When it is considered that 250 million-odd acres of the “privately” held total are now in the hands of major corporate entities, the real dimension of the “threat” to small land holders (or more accurately, lack of it) stands revealed. Government spokespersons have pointed out that the disposition of public lands does not always conform to treaty areas. While this is true, it in no way precludes some process of negotiated land exchange wherein the boundaries of indigenous nations are redrawn by mutual consent to an exact, or at least a much closer conformity. All that is needed is an honest, open, and binding forum—such as a new bilateral treaty process—with which to proceed. In fact, numerous native peoples have, for a long time, repeatedly and in a variety of ways, expressed a desire to participate in just such a process. Nonetheless, it is argued, there will still be at least some non-Indians “trapped” within such restored areas. Actually, they would not be trapped at all. The federally imposed genetic criteria of “Indian-ness” discussed elsewhere in this book notwithstanding, indigenous nations have the same rights as any other to define citizenry by allegiance (naturalization) rather than by race. Non-Indians could apply for citizenship, or for some form of landed alien status which would allow them to retain their property until they die. In the event they could not reconcile themselves to living under any jurisdiction other than that of the United States, they would obviously have the right to leave, and they should have the right to compensation from their own government (which got them into the mess in the first place). Finally, and one suspects this is the real crux of things from the government/corporate perspective, any such restoration of land and attendant sovereign prerogatives to native nations would result in a truly massive loss of “domestic” resources to the United States, thereby impairing the country’s economic and military capacities (see “Radioactive Colonialism” essay for details). For everyone who queued up to wave flags and tie on yellow ribbons during the United States’ recent imperial adventure in the Persian Gulf, this prospect may induce a certain psychic trauma. But, for progressives at least, it should be precisely the point. When you think about these issues in this way, the great mass of non-Indians in North America really have much to gain and almost nothing to lose, from the success of native people in struggles to reclaim the land which is rightfully ours. The tangible diminishment of US material power which is integral to our victories in this sphere stands to pave the way for realization of most other agendas from anti-imperialism to environmentalism, from African American liberation to feminism, from gay rights to the ending of class privilege – pursued by progressive on this continent. Conversely, succeeding with any or even all of these other agendas would still represent an inherently oppressive situation in their realization is contingent upon an ongoing occupation of Native North America without the consent of Indian people. Any North American revolution which failed to free indigenous territory from non-Indian domination would be simply a continuation of colonialism in another form. Regardless of the angle from which you view the matter, the liberation of Native North America, liberation of the land first and foremost, is the key to fundamental and positive social changes of many other sorts. One thing they say, leads to another. The question has always been, of course, which “thing” is to the first in the sequence. A preliminary formulation for those serious about achieving radical change in the United States might be “First Priority to First Americans” Put another way this would mean, “US out of Indian Country.” Inevitably, the logic leads to what we’ve all been so desperately seeking: The United States – at least what we’ve come to know it – out of North America altogether. From there it can be permanently banished from the planet. In its stead, surely we can join hands to create something new and infinitely better. That’s our vision of “impossible realism.” Isn’t it time we all worked on attaining it?

#### Ethics must always come before ontology—it predetermines ontological questions

Cohen 1 (Richard A., the Isaac Swift Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, pg. 5 “Ethics, Exegesis, and Philosophy: Interpretation after Levinas,” Cambridge University Press)

**Philosophy as ethical exegesis** – discovering the ethical in the ontological, seeing the lower in the light of the higher, not anthropology but ethics – **is attuned to this** deeper, weightier, **truer history that defies straightforward language** and is refractory to the light of publicity. Its commitments are not to visible history alone, the history of historiography, but rather to a more insecure but deeper history, that of the humanity of the human. The human is not a biological or a rational category. Rather, **the human emerges when and where morality is at work. Humanity is not a given but an achievement**, an accomplishment, an elevation. Moral rectitude and justice are rare enough for philosophy also to miss them. **Ethical exegesis is philosophy attentive to responsibilities beyond epistemology, and higher than the aesthetic celebration of the spectacle of be-ing or its language. It is thinking bound to the “difficult freedom” of moral responsibilities and obligations** – for fellow humans, for sentient life, and finally for all of creation in all its diversity. And as such it is wisdom, or the quest for wisdom – philosophy.

**Just as the aesthetic dimension is not by itself evil (or good), one cannot say that the aesthetic life is false (or true). Like good and evil, truth and falsity are not its standard. They are standards of epistemology**. Epistemology need not refrain from judging aesthetics, but neither epistemology nor aesthetics has the right to the last word. **Ethics**, in contrast, can **and must remind us that the aesthetic life is inferior to the moral life. The aesthetic world** – however spectacular, grand, or beautiful – is **too small a world. When aesthetics takes itself for a world it becomes precious**, as in Huysmans, **or both precious and precocious**, as in Heidegger and Derrida, or fascist, its true moral face. And let there be no doubt**, the aesthetic life revolves around the self**, is indeed its very cult. And thus **it is essentially linked to deat**h or, by dialectical rebound, linked to youth, for the self by itself is a mortal being.

**Regarding not the truth but the superiority of morality, of ethical commitment (“either/or”) over aesthetic disengagement (“both/and”), Kierkegaard has written penetrating and moving tributes to this wisdom**. The great nineteenth-century German Orthodox rabbi and scholar, Samson Raphael Hirsch, in the Jewish tradition, commenting on Proverbs (chapter two, “Wise Men and Fools”), notes that the word that text opposes to “wisdom” (Hebrew: chochmah), namely, “foolishness” (Hebrew: olat), “is related to oulai, 'perhaps, ' and ahfal, 'darkness'. ” 6 Again, Levinas's “temptation of temptation, ” the perhaps, the maybe, the possible, opposed to and by the actual, the here, the now, not the real but the moral “demands of the day. **” No one would oppose beauty, to be sure, but when self-regard becomes disregard for others** – and surely it tends in this direction – **then aesthetic desires become evils**, hardening rather than softening the heart. There are worthier, nobler tasks. **Ethical exegesis** – penetrating through the spectacle and its display of signs to its human dimension, the dimension of suffering and moral demand – **articulates the fragile but overpowering solidarity of a human community on the difficult road of redemption.** It will say and say again the rupture of the masks of being demanded by morality and of justice.

Beyond but through morality, ethical exegesis will also dare to suggest, obliquely, to be sure, the glimmer of another exigency – spirit, inspiration, absolution – more intense, higher, brighter, illuminating and not illuminated by the light of sun, moon and stars. Micah 6:8: “For he has told thee, oh humans, what is good, and what the Lord thy God does require of thee, but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God. ” Not a “proof text, ” to be sure, but a confirmation.

**The difference putting ethics first makes is of no less consequence than that which, according to Husserl, separates philosophy and psychology**. That difference was at once the greatest chasm and yet barely discernible, in that the findings of these two disciplines would be strictly parallel to one another, so parallel that a sentence from one could be transposed word for word into the other, yet their significance would be entirely different. Philosophy – in this case ethics, what I am calling **ethical exegesis – would be the absolute source of all meaning**, hence the ground of psychology and sociology and all the sciences, social or natural. While not another epistemological grounding of epistemology, ethical exegesis nonetheless still has the pretension to provide the reason for philosophy. **But “reason” in the sense of “end, ” “purpose, ” “aim” – what is most important, most significant**. Without returning to pre-modern philosophy, without imposing one arbitrary ontotheo-logy or another, without making a fetish of science or of its drifting, and most especially without the pretended “second innocence” of aesthetic celebration, ethical exegesis – in moral responsibilities and obligations, and in the call to justice built upon these – supplies a reason for philosophy, a reason for knowledge and a reason for living. No doubt this is a very large claim. And in this sense, this is an ambitious book. Very simply**: nothing is more significant than serving others. All other significations, in all other registers, derive from this deepest or highest significance.**