

## **NATIVE STUDIES IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

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A case can be made for the existence of an aboriginal Native studies, whether or not it is written down or taught in formal schools. The first questions in Native studies were raised by the first migrants into the Americas, hunters crossing the Bering Land Bridge some 30,000 years ago. Intellectual traditions developed within Native societies for all those thousands of years and these were recorded by European writers. Local native intellectuals, leaders, and artists passed on aboriginal intellectual traditions when they served as informants to the Europeans. There were biases in the process of recording and interpreting aboriginal Native studies, but it can be argued that the creative fountainhead for the several thousand books in modern Native studies was primarily aboriginal Native studies. The issue over whether or not it is a Native person who does the recording of the traditions fades away in the face of the more important tasks of validity and reliability in the recording.

Some Native people today are anxious to acquire more control over Native studies, for a variety of reasons - such as the validation of modern political or religious movements in Native communities. The truth about the Native heritage has become something of a political pawn because the special rights, land claims, and charter cultural status of Native people flows from their unique heritage. This has led to a curious dilemma in the Native community of both distrusting academics because of the academic's power to interpret

their heritage and the positive need to use academia for their own purposes. We thus see a variety of orientations in the various Native studies programs: 1) to help non-Natives understand the Native heritage, 2) to Indianize the university and its methods of perceiving and teaching, 3) to help Native people understand their own heritage and problems, and 4) to help Native people adjust to universities and acquire a university education.

About 1% of all books published in the U.S. or handled by U.S. distributors and "in print" or currently available from publishers (5,800 of 598,000 total listings by subject in *Books in Print*) are concerned with the Native people of the Western Hemisphere (Bowker 1980). About 1.8% of books published in Canada (550 of 29,000 listings in *Canadian Books in Print*) are about Indians (395), Inuit (105), or Metis (50) (Pluscauskas and Buffer 1981). The U.S. publishes and distributes 10.9 times more book titles on Natives than Canada, and book titles per Native population (900,000 in the U.S. and 700,000 in Canada) is 8.5 times greater in the U.S. We do not expect Canadian publishing to match the American rate in relation to the size of Native population in the U.S., which would mean publishing or distributing 4,000 more book titles on Natives, but we do expect to see a strong and continued expansion in the Canadian list.

In the volume of research and publication, the Indians, Eskimos, and Metis fare rather well. Coverage by area is uneven-extensive in the U.S.A., moderate in Canada, and poor in Latin America. The coverage by topics is uneven-extensive in the anthropological approach to subjects; moderate in popular interest topics such as the plastic arts; and weak in topics such as dance, economics, history, music, philosophy, political science, sociology, and religion. The literature has been written overwhelmingly by non-Native people, although there has been a slow increase in writing by Natives throughout the past few decades.

There are far more people in the academic system today who have done research on Indian cultures than there are people currently teaching about Indians in universities and colleges. About 175 or 40% of the 436 full-time anthropology teaching faculty at Canadian universities have had some research experience related to North American Natives (Price 1981b). However, only about 20% regularly teach a course on Natives somewhere in the Americas. And anthro-

pology is still the major discipline to offer courses in Native studies.

It is in the very small number of courses offered that Native studies does so poorly. Native studies courses involve only about 0.2% of the faculty positions and curricular content in Canadian universities and large colleges. Small colleges typically lack even a single course in Native studies. Only nine of the 47 community colleges in Ontario offer at least one Native studies course, although Confederation College in Thunder Bay has several courses.

By counting the Native studies courses in the catalogs of the fifty largest Canadian universities and colleges, I estimate that an equivalence of only 66 faculty positions of the 35,733 total full-time faculty positions in Canada (Royce 1979) are currently used in teaching courses with a predominant Native studies content. The importance of Native content where it is only a minor component, such as in race and ethnic relations courses, is impossible for me to estimate. This equivalence of 66 positions is filled by about 200 individuals, most of whom do not teach more than one or two semesters of Native studies courses a year, may skip an entire year under the pressure to teach other courses, and take regular research leaves.

The 0.2% of the curriculum is not only very small, but like the publication side of Native studies it is poorly distributed, particularly toward social anthropology and archaeology while most other academic disciplines consistently ignore the Native peoples. This ignorance affects both the research-publication side of Native studies and the teaching side of Native studies, because there is a positive feed-back relationship between teaching and research. We tend to develop courses on subjects we know about through research and in the process of teaching we are led into new topics of research. Given the weakness of research and teaching on Native studies outside of anthropology there has been a slow shift within anthropology to fill out those gaps left by the non-participation of historians, political scientists, and so forth, but it is still not enough and the anthropologists are not well equipped in terms of methodologies and research experiences to do justice to the work of different disciplines.

Anthropology has its own conservative and esoteric traditions, its own parochial definitions of appropriate research topics, beyond which it is extremely difficult to publish in anthropology journals

or teach in departments of anthropology. Thus people in a new discipline such as Native studies must continually pioneer on the fringes of their own disciplines. If someone submits a paper on Native Canadian economics to an anthropology journal it would probably be rejected on the grounds that it is about economics and if it is submitted to a journal of economics it would probably be rejected on the grounds that it is about anthropology. The same kind of thing happens in course development, where anthropology curriculum committees insist on limiting a department's resources to traditional anthropology areas such as prehistory, ethnographic descriptions at contact times, acculturation, linguistics, and kinship systems. On the other hand, other disciplines are even more conservative. I do not know of a single economics or business department in Canada that has pioneered to the extent of sponsoring its own courses on Canadian Indian economics or business enterprises. The narrow-mindedness of the disciplines of economics and business has forced the federal government to step in and fund vocational programmes on such things as Indian band management and small business management, such as at Confederation College in Thunder Bay and Canadore College in North Bay.

It will take considerable planning and action on the part of those interested in Native studies to turn this aspect of academic ethnocentrism around so that Native-related material may be introduced appropriately throughout the academic curriculum. It is important to attack the Western biases of such disciplines as economics, history, literature, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Departments of art and sometimes religion may already have a course related to the Americas. We must campaign for curricular reforms to introduce at least one course with Native Canadian or Indian in the title in every one of these departments. That no one on the staff is specialized in the subject is not a sufficient excuse. They can retrain themselves, pull out of their esoteric European studies, settle down here in the Americas, and help pioneer such fields as North American Indian economics or philosophy or sociology.

The essence of modern Native studies is the spread of research and teaching beyond the old anthropology monopoly. The few sociologists there are in the field make important and quite different kinds of contributions to Native studies than anthropologists. The sociologists in both the U.S. and Canada have explored somewhat different issues than anthropologists and they have emphasized

different research methods, such as large scale questionnaire surveys, media content analysis, and institutional studies. I am critical of sociologists, however, in their practice of just placing their research results in the context of ethnic studies rather than creating a new subdiscipline of North American Indian sociology.

Although now fairly well developed in the U.S., the historical study of Indians in Canada is still in its infancy and it is poorly developed as a teaching field in Canada. Dozens of universities do not offer even a single course on the history of the Indians of Canada (Price 1981A) and it tends to be presented from the White perspectives of warfare, fur trade, and treaties when it is presented.

The historians assume that the Europeans determined the basic patterns of Indian history, probably because they work mostly with sources written by Europeans and tend to know very little about the Native societies themselves. One of my complaints is that even in the over emphasis on war and trade the historians missed the major correlations with evolutionary levels. For example, band heritage societies of the Arctic, Subarctic, and Plateau were rarely ever involved in warfare and were the only societies to stay with the fur trade while tribal level societies of the East and Plains were militant in warfare and participated in the fur trade in only a brief way: as exploitive trappers, as voyageurs, as waders to other Indians, and in providing provisions to the trading posts.

Washburn (1975:265), a prominent U.S. historian, tried to explain why Indian students are attracted more to anthropology than to history. The academic historian must be severely objective, to abstract, compare, and "hold the record of discrete events in his hand and organize them in the context of a time-oriented 'base'... Indian history is oriented to place . . . and may be defined as the accepted beliefs of a community about its past." There is a difficult alienation process then for Indian students to see their heritage in an objective way. Anthropology handles this situation with more personal involvement in methods of an evolutionary continuum in theory. An Indian familiar with his Native language and culture has a strong advantage in Indian anthropology because of its emphasis on participant observation and interviewing. Also, anthropology is often carried on in settings in which Indians are comfortable, in the field with contemporary people, while historians work in libraries on the past.

About 40 of the 238 universities and large colleges in Canada offer one or more Native studies courses, including most of the 39 institutions that have anthropology programmes. The growth in both anthropology and in Native studies courses the last several years has been strongest in the Prairie provinces (Price 1981B). It seems that the number of Native studies courses at most large universities has remained fairly static while the growth has taken place in a few smaller universities, such as Lethbridge, Regina, Lakehead, Laurentian, and Trent.

There have been two major movements so far in Canada within modern Native studies in universities that moved beyond anthropology. The first was in education at the University of Saskatchewan and then spread over the years to Regina, Brandon, Lakehead, and Western. All of these universities have programmes specifically designed to train teachers to work in Indian schools. In Quebec the Cree School Board has its own Native Teacher Training Programme in northern Quebec, which is accredited through the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi.

The second major development was in interdisciplinary Native studies programmes, first at Trent University and then at Laurentian, Lakehead, Manitoba, Brandon, Regina, Lethbridge, Old Sun College on the Blackfoot Reserve, and now new small programmes at Erindale College of the University of Toronto, and St. Thomas University in Fredericton, N.B. Manitou Community College ran for a few years in La Macaza, Quebec and then closed down due to an insufficient number of students. Beyond these formal programmes there are also relatively strong lists of undergraduate Native studies courses at Calgary, Alberta, and Simon Fraser.

At the graduate level the University of Toronto remains strong in archaeology and social anthropology. The first Ph.D. thesis presented in Canada was in 1900 in Native studies at the University of Toronto, "The Huronian of the Basin of the Moose River." Also strong in Indian archaeology are Calgary and Simon Fraser. Montreal and Laval have good depth at the graduate level in the social anthropology of Native studies, but both schools have few courses listed at the undergraduate level. Saskatchewan has its Native Law Centre and the Program for Legal Studies by Native People. York has a programme on Native Political and Economic Development within the Faculty of Environmental Studies. Carleton has a programme to

recruit Native students into their graduate programme in Social Work.

Large institutions with few Native studies courses need to be particularly targeted in campaigns that are designed to expand the Native studies curricula. In the west there is Victoria and British Columbia. In Ontario the weak schools are Carleton, Guelph, McMaster, Ottawa, Ryerson, Waterloo, and Windsor. The problem schools of Quebec are particularly Concordia, McGill, the various schools within the University of Quebec, and Sherbrooke. Dalhousie, Memorial, and New Brunswick all have few courses. In the U.S.A. these curricula change campaigns have worked best when Native students and Native leaders within the local communities have been included. It is not enough to explain to the faculty the narrow-mindedness of teaching just their own European heritage to their students. It is necessary to use the leverage of ethnic politics. As a starting goal such a campaign might ask for at least one course on Native studies in archaeology, art, history, literature, social anthropology, and sociology, for a total of at least six courses spread across six disciplines. The typical response of curricula committees is that the subject is already covered in some other course, such as World Ethnography or Ethnic and Race Relations. Native studies courses must have their own titles to stand out in the sea of European heritage courses.

#### Native Studies in the U.S.A.

Modern Native studies began primarily in the U.S. so some of the literature, program ideas, and faculty have come into Canadian Native studies from the U.S. Because Indian studies in Canada is lagging behind the U.S. and has so many parallels, we can get some ideas of what to expect in Canada by studying the U.S. experience.

One role of anthropology has been to record and present the aboriginal studies of Native informants. This began as an antiquarian interest during the nineteenth century but evolved over time into a social science that was cross-cultural, interested in the internal perspectives of societies, and tried to acquire holistic and humanistic understandings of societies. It is for these reasons that anthropology became the main source for modern Native studies. However, in something like a troubled parent-child relationship it has been difficult for anthropologists to help Native studies develop its full

potential in non-anthropological ways and those in Native studies have often found it necessary to attack anthropology in order to establish its separate validity, it is still difficult, for example, for many people in Native studies to accept the more antiquarian side of anthropology, particularly archaeology, as being part of Native studies. Another source for modern Native studies is in the education institutions, the Indian schools, where a dialogue between teachers and students clarified the academic issues in elementary and secondary schools. Places like Carlisle (Pennsylvania), Haskell (Kansas), Chilocco (Oklahoma), the Institute of American Indian Arts (New Mexico) in the U.S., and the Mohawk Institute in Canada played a role in creating a new curricula. Dartmouth College's Indian program seems to be an extension of this conventional education style of Native studies with initiatives from within an administration with a long term commitment to teaching Indian people and slowly adding Indian content to a broad spectrum of courses.

A third modern source is recent and more spectacular in effect. That is, in the push from racial and ethnic politics, in the 1960's in the U.S. and in the 1970's in both the U.S. and Canada, for interdisciplinary Native studies programs and departments. This is on the U.S. model of world-area studies and racial-ethnic studies programs. While university disciplines were breaking up into the specializations, they could be brought back together both for research and teaching by focusing on areas of the world with similar cultures. Advantages are gained in terms of holistic perspectives by bringing together the data and insights from several disciplines on a single society or cultural tradition. This is particularly true when the societies themselves lack the elaborate institutionalizations of state societies, as in most cases of the American Indians. In the U.S. the racial politics of the 1960's helped to begin some synthesis of academic material to create Black studies, Chicano studies, and American Indian studies, on the model of such earlier programs as East Asian studies. American Indian studies developed in the more politically sensitive institutions the public universities in the west where there are large numbers of Indians. Courses developed in those universities eventually spread in the 1970's into many of the small community colleges, such as the fourteen community colleges in Arizona.

Patricia Locke (1978) described 66 Native studies programs in

1973 and then 97 programs in 1978 in the U.S., 51 in universities and 46 in colleges. In 1973 they had 11,000 students, 8.6% at the graduate level. Most of them are new and they are largely concentrated in the western states with large Indian populations such as Arizona, California, Colorado, Minnesota, Montana, North and South Dakota, Oklahoma, Washington, and Wisconsin.

It may be that a fourth modern development is now occurring in the U.S. in which programs are designed around an aesthetic, recreational, and intellectual orientation, rather than the earlier orientations of science in anthropology, Indian education, or racial politics. Some of these most recent programs are in areas where there are few reservation Indians, such as Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Archaeology is an integral part of these programs.

The goat push for Indian courses came from Indian students themselves and it has only been in the past twenty years that large numbers of Indians in the U.S. went on to college and university. By 1970 the U.S. had 28,204 Indians enrolled in institutions of high learning, including 1,290 graduate students (Churchill and Hill 1979). D'Andrade (1975) indicates that in 1970, Indians were 0.5% of the total enrolment and 0.9% of the graduate enrolment in institutions of higher learning in the U.S. The Indian population of the U.S. is only about 0.4% so, with a correction for an Indian population curve that is younger than the national curve, it appears that the proportion of Indians in advanced education was at least approaching that of the nation as a whole. Also, there is a core of determined Native people who stay with education right into graduate school.

The rate of participation by Indians in higher education was 3.4% in the U.S. in 1970, but only 1.9% for status Indians in Canada in 1979 (6,580; Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1980). While U.S. Indians complain that they have only 89 Indian M.D.'s Canada has only Clare Brant, Melvyn Lavalle, and a handful of other M.D.'s. Based on changes going on now, I assume that Canadian Indians will continue to increase their participation rate in higher education and equal the U.S.'s 1970 rate by about 1990, or twenty years behind. This increased participation by Native people should have the same kind of profound effect on the heightened demand for Native studies courses that increased Native enrolments had in

the U.S.

Washburn (1975) and Churchill and Hill (1979) criticized the separatist type of U.S. Indian studies program because it can become isolated from the usual operations of a university and have severe problems with status, curricular development, staffing, and the preparation of students to operate in the highly European and urban environment of the university. Commenting on the problems of the program at the University of California at Berkeley, Washburn (1975:266) wrote "When a university program originates with a strong political orientation and emphasizes ethnic purity as a prime qualification, one should not be surprised to find it existing in isolation from the traditional departments. The greater the emphasis on political activism and ethnic exclusivity in the Indian studies program, the less the chance of a common sharing of skills and experience within the university."

There is an element of truth in what Washburn wrote for the Canadian institutions as well, but he is ignoring that ethnic politics were usually necessary to get any courses at all established in disciplines other than anthropology. He cites the program at the University of California at Los Angeles as well integrated into the university and academically sound, without noting that it is earlier than Berkeley's program and it too went through a difficult political phase. Roger Buffalohead, the first program director at U.C.L.A., told how his students joined the Alcatraz occupation and "that was part of their education." (Price 1978:11). In a survey of history courses in fourteen large universities on the two sides of the U.S.-Canada border I found Native American courses constituted only 0.4% in the U.S. and 1.1% in Canada on the average of the total number of courses in the various departments. Indian history courses were offered at all only in universities where current Indian political activism is strong - Ontario, Wisconsin, and the Canadian prairies (Price 1981A). Thus, racial politics can play a positive role in the initial establishment of a program, but we must be careful to avoid letting Indian racism detract from the program's integration with the rest of the university.

The failure and poor quality of some Native studies programs stems from the combination of the conservativeness of academia and the inadequate academic development of Native studies teachers and teaching materials. That is, since modern Native studies is a new

discipline its teachers have often been inexperienced in teaching and in how to operate effectively within universities. Even such contentious issues as topical and politicized courses would be better accepted by administrations if they had a higher level of academic content. It is when these courses become simply propaganda and an organizational base for political action that they run into trouble. Thus for example, people favouring women's studies managed to get quite politically-oriented courses into the university curricula by presenting their views in an academically respectable context, such as cross-cultural studies of sex roles.

Based on the experiences of problems with U.S. programs, Churchill (1980) recommended that Native content be integrated into existing courses and departments: 1) to avoid problems of staffing and funding, 2) to expose Native studies to a broad student population, 3) to avoid the stigma of a specially supported program that just "trains Indians to be Indians", and 4) to influence academia and society itself with Native cultural ideas. The staff in Native studies must be 1) prepared to criticize the ethnocentrism of the *status quo*, 2) be prepared to offer alternative curricula when the opportunity arises, and 3) fight for the staffing of Native specialists without full academic credentials.

Thornton (1978) discussed the development of American Indian studies as an academic discipline in its own right. That is, beyond the university education of Indians and the spread of American Indian material throughout academia, what does Native studies offer as the core of its discipline? In methodology it is multidisciplinary and uses the usual participant observation, small groups methods, questionnaires, literary analysis, and so forth. Its uniqueness is in the importance attached to 1) perspectives that are internal to Native societies; 2) the advantages of holistic perspectives that can be acquired by bringing together data and insights from several disciplines; 3) the uniqueness of Indian societies because of their resistance to assimilation and their special historical and legal status; and 4) the value of using knowledge synthesized by the various disciplines in applied ways to criticize and improve Indian economics, education, health, politics, and so forth.

These rationale are similar for all area studies programs. Area studies has generally been a way to encourage, consolidate, and validate non-European research and teaching and thus break down

the European ethnocentrism of universities. All of these goals have also been a part of anthropology since its foundation so I think that, once Native studies matures as a discipline, the new discipline will appreciate the value of its anthropological parentage.

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