

INTRODUCTION

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We present here the history of a department of native studies in one university in Canada which elected to follow a full time, independent, normal funding route. This is followed by two papers which examine the philosophy and future direction of native studies both in Canada and elsewhere. Finally a fourth paper examines the situation of one university in which native studies is viewed as interdisciplinary and thus inherently academically inferior to those Euro-Canadian standards of wisdom embodied in fields which one can profess. These papers, which we hope will be only the first in a long string of communications from departments, colleges, institutes and advisors across the country, are particularly instructive for us, a dozen years after Trent University legitimized native studies by first including it in a Canadian curriculum.

It quickly becomes clear from Michael Blonar's paper on the Brandon University case that the development of native studies was encouraged by many faculty members and administrators, out of what appears to have been a genuine commitment to the provision of education for the financially disadvantaged and a belief that qualified instructors - linguists, anthropologists, historians and the like - would ensure that acceptable standards would be maintained. What is rarely noted, however, is the importance of native involvement in the development of the programs and the critical role which native political pressure can play, both within a university or college and in terms of a provincial funding agency. The lesson of the Brandon experience would seem to be that progress will take place on the road to independent departmental status, with a full complement of courses and a range of qualified personnel, but the progress may be remarkable for its slowness unless students, the communities from which they come, and the organizations which represent them are prepared to study, and plan, and draft, and push continuously for full development. (A side issue, perhaps, but one which may ultimately be of greater significance, is the relationship hinted at by Blonar between the Department of Native Studies and

the communities, in which the Department regularly receives visits from Elders, Chiefs and Councillors, and the communities receivesuch courses as Native Law offered in Cree, as but one example.) Clearly the pattern of development at Brandon has been to the advantage of all concerned, but the political aspects of that growth are at least as important as those which are of a more academic nature.

Jack Sikand and Art Blue wrote in clearly introspective moods, such that we can begin to appreciate their early entrance into this field in the 1960's. These papers actually date from 1977 but obviously stand the test of that short time. Their concerns are similar; that of communicating information in an academic framework without biasing the essentials of the information by removing it from a particular native milieu and examining it in an institutional fashion. The contra is the use of modern research methods and techniques to obtain and "handle" the information to begin with, again without damage to people or inquiry. Expressed another way in a case with which one of the principals is concerned - can a group of medicine men on a large USA reservation better understand the nature of youthful acute depression when given computer-generated, environmental studies maps and explanations of that process? (They can; communication, after all, is technologically a two way street.)

John Price's paper is a damning indictment of an essentially anti-academic point of view found very commonly in our universities. Indeed, this establishmentarianism which decrees Provencal and Basque and Korean to be languages worthy of study while Cree and Oneida are not, has probably done more harm to the expansion of tile humanities and social sciences of Canada than any other obstacle. Given that Canada is one of the last areas of the world where some people still hunt, rather than trap, for a living, with groups in which a rich spiritual life has existed underground for two hundred years, where the avunculate makes a (greater) monkey of DIAND Band Lists, and matriliney thrives in spite of Indian Act legislative morals and thousands of bigoted school texts and histories. To suggest that scholarship should either begin or concentrate elsewhere is intellectual inadequacy for the whole, no matter how important it might deservedly be for the individual. But this is an attitude and it is prevalent. Price deals with it in one university

and some generalization may be possible. The topic will hopefully sponsor further communication.

Two sections follow these papers. They are the first part of a national, on-going directory of native studies and some research notes. The former consists in this issue only of a listing of requirements and courses for universities with separate departments for native studies. Hopefully this will be very much extended in future to include "special" programs, career orientations, etc. The Research Notes. are self-explanatory and again will be a continuous service of CJNS.

Finally, I became responsible for this area by default some months ago when the previous editor moved to a remote area and had to give up the position. I am pleased to announce that John Price has become our new Native Studies Editor, effective April 1981,. His address is: Dr. John A. Price, Department of Anthropology, York University, Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3.