

## **EDUCATING "INDIANS": PRACTICES OF BECOMING CANADIAN**

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### **Abstract / Résumé**

This article examines the history of educational policy towards Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Rather than focusing on ways in which Aboriginal peoples have been singled out for special treatment, the article examines the homogenizing, disciplinary practices of education that are borrowed from, and continuous with, White society. It is argued that the movement towards Aboriginal self-government in the realm of education must attend to these micro-practices of power, and not just to the formal principle of sovereignty, in order to resist cultural homogenization.

Cet article vise à examiner l'histoire de la politique touchant à l'éducation des Premières Nations du Canada. Plutôt que de s'attacher aux aspects qui font valoir les traitements avantageux présentés aux autochtones, l'article met en lumière l'homogénéité des techniques disciplinaires éducatives empruntées et directement liées à société des Blancs. On pense que la tentance qui va vers une forme de gouvernement autochtone autonome en ce qui concerne l'éducation, doit se plier à ces micro-pratiques de pouvoir en évitant de se baser sur les principes formels de souveraineté, dans le but de résister à une homogénéisation culturelle.

"Paternalism governs only those things the Indian does as an Indian" (Steiner, 1968-256).

There is much truth in the above statement. The Aboriginal peoples of North America as a group have been the object of particular and conscious policies and programs aimed variably at "civilizing," "assimilating," and finally at "integrating" them. Such government policies have addressed these groups in terms of their "Indianness," and while precisely what "Indian" means has varied through history, it has always been in relation to this "being" that government has established itself.

The construction of a paternalistic relationship to Aboriginal peoples was initiated in Canada starting from 1830 (Surtees, 1969; Upton, 1973). Prior to this, Aboriginal inhabitants had been related to by government largely as sovereign peoples, with whom military alliances were created for mutual benefit. The favour of First Nations peoples was carried with a tradition of "gift" giving by both the French and the English. There were precedents during the time of French hegemony in Canada to "civilize" the original population (Stanley, 1949; 1950), but the historical entrenchment of such a policy came later, with the consolidation of British power in the Canadas, in association with pressures to open up western lands for settlement, and within a growing climate of "humanism." While it may have taken years for much of the intent of this policy to have been activated in concrete programs, and while there have been subsequent legislative changes, the history of the relationship of the Canadian government to Aboriginal peoples has until very recently followed in the same paternalistic path set down in 1830.\*

While it is tempting, then, to examine the historical relationship to Aboriginal peoples in terms of this paternalism towards "the Indian as an Indian," such an approach tends to eclipse the ways in which the shift in relations towards Natives in 1830 reflects a more general and widespread historical transformation in the nature of the state (Foucault, 1991). Beginning in the late 16th century and blossoming fully with the demise of mercantilism, what Foucault terms the "art of government" emerges with a shift of state concern away from merely its own perpetuation, toward the security and happiness of "*individuals*." The conception of the individual as the basic unit of society that we find in early liberal political philosophy, gives birth to the concept of "civil society" considered as a natural entity, separate from and pre-existing the state. Civil society is understood to be the arena wherein the fundamentally atomistic individuals of liberal political theory give free expression to their desires and preferences. Government is derivative of this society and finds its justification therein, in safeguarding and controlling the conditions under which individuals can express themselves. This birth

of the concept of civil society, furthermore, coincides with the flourishing of the new scientific relationship to human beings, a science which thus becomes deployed by the state in its function as “manager.” Management of the civil society—or what from the perspective of government comes to be regarded as “population,” monitored with the new science of statistics—becomes the end of government.

With population constituted as the object of government intervention, relevant political targets are defined: the condition of the individual in terms of education, health, economic status, behaviour pertaining to sex, crime, and—more recently—social patterns according to race, gender, and so on. Management of civil society ceases to be merely legal, as in the traditional notions of sovereignty formulated by the social contract theorists, but rather happens through the relations of power operating within knowledges and institutions.

The shift of government policy toward Aboriginal peoples which Surtees describes, then, is entirely consistent with the development of civil society as an entity considered to be separate from the state, a society of which Aboriginal peoples would be merely one object, one target of government “intervention.” These individuals became a “problem” with which government had to deal. And it was precisely in delimiting them in terms of their “Indian” identity that they could become the object of particular government interventions. Originally dealt with according to the tribal affiliations and alliances by which they identified themselves, in the eyes of government Aboriginal peoples became a single category to be administered according to the same principles across the nations—“as Indians.”

Paternalism, then, does govern the Aboriginal person “as an Indian.” But not “only those things the Indian does as an Indian.” What a larger historical picture reveals is that many of the procedures of managing Aboriginal peoples were not specific to them; as a group they were merely one target by which government could extend itself to encompass the population as a whole. By isolating paternalism as something specific to Aboriginal peoples, such literature tends only to concern itself with the way they have been treated “differently” as a group from the rest of the population.

Hence practices such as the removal of Aboriginal children from their families, their placement in residential schools and with White foster families, the requirement of special passes to leave Reserves, the suppression of traditional ceremonies, languages, and so on, have been well documented. What is less well documented are the ways, largely borrowed from and consistent with White society, by which Aboriginal children and communities have also been controlled. Not only has there

been a relative absence of attention to these generalized, unspoken, and subtle forces of social control in the literature, but indeed one finds a tendency to hide these forces through only implicit reference to them as the norm and the standard against which the injustices in the treatment of Aboriginal peoples can be measured.

The following examination of the history of educational policy and practices towards Aboriginal peoples aims to interpret it within its relationship to the more general procedures of social control by which the broader society governs itself. It seeks to bring to light that unspoken "standard" by which the analysis of the treatment of Aboriginal peoples has tended to define itself. And it is in magnifying these too often ignored practices and procedures that we can find new targets of resistance to cultural homogenization.

### **Assimilation Policy**

When the state decided to get involved in the task of "civilizing" the Aboriginal peoples, there was, for the most part, no consideration of their cultures as having any value; they were rather what needed to be eradicated. The major thrust of government endeavour was to make the Aboriginal person into a White man. And "education"—Euro-Canadian schooling—was a fundamental means of accomplishing this.

It was particularly after Confederation, when the federal government was given a clear responsibility for the education of Aboriginal persons in each of the provinces, that such schooling was implemented in a more consistent and comprehensive way, according to more precisely elaborated policies. Federal Indian Day Schools had been established across Canada by the late 1800s.

The "failure" of this schooling in terms of high dropout rates, poor attendance, and age-grade distributions, highlights some of the particular problems the government had in integrating peoples who had alternative bases of family and economic life. In particular, parental resistance to compelling their children's attendance led to experimentation with the repressive and highly criticized residential industrial schools. Since parents could not be relied on to co-operate in the governing of their children by Euro-Canadian standards, the solution was seen in removing children from families and placement in schools where they could be supervised much more rigorously. The unpleasant and degrading delousing programs, beatings, repression of Aboriginal languages, and the harsh regime of these schools are well evidenced in Jane Willis' autobiographical account (1973), as well as in discussions by Miller (1991) and Persson (1986).

Yet such blatant repression was often ineffective in that it evoked the greatest resistance from Aboriginal peoples. Hamilton (1986) points out that even before 1900 government officials were questioning residential schools because of the problems which had emerged, one important one being the opposition from Indian parents. Miller (1991) notes that the intentions of the residential schools were often not fully actualized because parents, especially where schools were close by, insisted on having input into the running of the school. Gresko (1986) similarly comments that Aboriginal parents tended successfully to reject assimilation programmes in early Oblate mission schools, while being more amenable to adult education programmes which "fit traditional lifestyles."

For those students that did undergo the full harshness of these schools, the resentment evoked may well have been a stimulation to revalorize their old traditions against the negativity of what they had experienced. Willis' (1973) recounting is clearly within this spirit. And Miller cites the account of one student who "never forgave the woman who cut his hair while he slept and if he followed the inclination of his own heart he would throw off all the education and go back where he would never see a white man" (1991:334).

A subsequent educational policy change in 1910 away from assimilation and towards segregation of Aboriginal persons on Reserves seemed to have little effect on how schools were run, apart from the diminishment of vocational training which would have enabled Aboriginal persons to compete with Whites in the bottom rung of the labour pool (Barman, 1986). Separate residential and day schools continued, along with their "civilization" measures.

1946 marked an official abandoning of the assimilation project in favour of what was termed "integration." The promotion of separate schools for Aboriginal children was stopped and instead "joint agreements" began to be negotiated with provinces to "integrate" these children into the non-Aboriginal system. Residential and day schools continued to operate where mainstream facilities were unavailable.

An analysis of the 1958 workshop proceedings of the Oblate Fathers of Canada, the Roman Catholic Order which was administering forty-four of the still continuing residential schools, is highly instructive in revealing what this policy "shift" signified in terms of the state of the educational art. While the thrust of these proceedings is to recommend delaying the de-segregation process, many of the ideas and practices promoted provide a concise articulation of the sophisticated tactics of control increasingly being incorporated within the rhetoric of a more "humanistic" Native education.

## Integration

### The Oblates

Rather than "assimilating," the notion of "acculturation" developed as the basis by which the Aboriginal person could "integrate" successfully into White society. In this conception, the Aboriginal child would shed enough, but not all, of his Aboriginal traits to enable him to function like Whites within mainstream society.

The epitome of this new approach to Aboriginal education may be captured in the following:

Any realistic programme of schooling aimed at acculturating the Indian must be based on *respect* for his ethnic and cultural background and on the desire to meet his *special* needs. It must include a frank, *pleasant*, gradual and methodical initiation of the Indian to the uses and customs of our Canadian society [my emphasis] (Oblate Fathers in Canada 1958:13).

Rather than repression of Aboriginal culture, the key here is respect. The validation of Aboriginal traditions by the dominant society is an attempt to at least partly capture what had previously constituted such a profound basis for resistance to assimilation. In turning to their traditions, the Aboriginal person no longer needs to turn away from the mainstream. The construction of "an enlightened pride in their ethnic descent" (Ibid:14) is to be done within the folds of, rather than in negation of, the larger society.

Indeed, now it is from the larger society that the recognition essential to this "pride" must be sought. "Respect for the Indian culture" comes from the teachers within a school which has an "official identification with the betterment of the Indian people" (Ibid:14). It is the instruments of White society which implant pride within the Aboriginal person. The child is the passive receiver. The relationship remains paternalistic, although it is cast in a more benevolent light. The shift here is away from a strategy in which the Aboriginal person is to become a White man by being punished for his Aboriginal traits. Rather he is made to feel good about his Aboriginal qualities within White society—made to feel a valuable part of this society, to undermine the Aboriginal/White cleavage. With the granting of his dignity to him, it is believed, he will identify with rather than against White society, and find the motivation to productively contribute to it.

That the particular pride cultivated in the Aboriginal person must be "enlightened" is significant. This cultivation of "enlightened pride" is regarded by the Oblates as "essential to the resurgence of native leader-

ship" (*Ibid*:14). The leadership envisioned here is not that of the highly articulate, angry and politicized First Nations leaders of today; the Ob-lates refer rather to leaders who would "raise their children the "Canadian way"...so that their children be readier for the Canadian school than they themselves were" (*Ibid*:36). The "enlightened" Aboriginal person is one who will maintain the dominant *status quo*, who recognizes that which is noble in his past, yet also comes to terms with "the hard facts of life"—that his day is over, and that it is best for he and his children to fit in, perhaps preserving those traditions and trinkets which will help him to that end.

The Aboriginal "leader" of enlightened pride, in the valorization of his ancestors' contributions, feels a part of the society and is fuelled to contribute to it. He sends his children to school on time. He teaches the virtue of hard work, of finishing one's home work, of getting high marks, of graduating, and so on. In short, he becomes like a middle class White Canadian parent. And as long as he negates this mode of parenting, his influence over the child should be circumvented; he remains "unenlightened."

Running through this principle of "respect" for the traditional cultural "background" in the new mode of social control is the notion that educational practices toward change should be "pleasant," contrary to the older, harsh disciplinary measures. Persson (1986) cites the implementation of this pleasure principle of acculturation by Missionaries at the Blue Quills Residential school in British Columbia:

Students were encouraged to join groups such as the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate. As one member said, "We were the elite of Blue Quills since not everyone could go. If your marks were high enough, and if you were a good girl, then you became a member of one of those groups." Rewards attached to religious membership were medallions and pictures and the privilege to attend special bingo parties and picnics (*Ibid*:153)...

Corporal punishment was, except for very severe offenses, replaced by a demerit system. When ten points were accumulated for such offenses as an untidy locker or untied shoelaces, the student was forbidden to watch the monthly movie (*Ibid*:163).

Persson goes on to quote a student as saying:

The administrators weren't stupid. The high school students were treated almost royally. They got privileges just to give the feeling, 'I want to be a high school student' (*Ibid*:160).

At another school it was reported:

Very little corporal punishment was meted out of Shingwauk. Instead peer pressure and shame were utilized to ensure good conduct.... An ingenious method was devised to discourage the students from using their Native tongue. Every week buttons were distributed to the children with more going to the newer arrivals who spoke little English. If a child spoke Ojibway (except at tea-time), his closest partner was allowed to demand a button. At the end of the week, the buttons per student were tallied up and those with the most received nuts in return (Wilson, 1986:76-77).

These types of rewards and punishments reveal the clear, individualizing practices which characterize such education. A spirit of competition is fostered but in a very particular way. The student is conscious of herself in relation to peers in terms of the privileges granted or denied. In the case of reward, there is promoted a pride of self, a pleasure in one's performance recognized as meritorious. Similarly punishments are directed at provoking feelings of shame and dissatisfaction with self. One strives to be "deserving" of the privileges one sees granted to one's peers. Rather than reacting against the teacher, one reacts *against one's own self*. One strives to become that which will be recognized and rewarded in a positive way.

Yet for individuals to participate in such practices, to be motivated in such ways, they must feel a part of the order; they must identify with it. Hence the Oblates recommend the cultivation of "a climate of family life" (Oblate Fathers in Canada, 1958:15) such that the individual "never feels a stranger or an outsider" (*Ibid*:14). The principal is assigned the role to:

sustain that aura of deep concern for the welfare of all of his pupils, gentle but firm control of the operation of the school, keen interest in academic achievement, supporter of fair play, concern for the development of economic competence through education in all of his pupils, and counsellor in family problems (*Ibid*:80).

The Oblates warn, with remarkable accuracy, the counter-"productive" effects of a negative, jarring encounter with White society:

Without active promotion of such [a positive] relationship the Indian pupil will withdraw within himself and foster feelings of bitterness if not hostility towards our Canadian society. He will adhere more closely to his own culture and shun those who deny him understanding, recognition and sympathy. In such a case; instead of favouring the pupil's acculturation towards our Canadian society, attendance at the



non-Indian school will, on the contrary, add to his sense of separateness (*ibid*:14).

To monitor the emotional situation of the individual students in the school, and hence further to avoid any "sense of separateness" which might undermine the constitutive effects this education seeks to have, a "guidance" system which takes into account "local conditions" and the particular "needs" of the individuals is recommended for all, not just problem children. Psychologist Chagnon of the Oblate workshop describes such guidance as "helping students to choose...between free goals" (*ibid*:64). He recommends counselling services as the means by which guidance can be made "essentially personal" and individualized (*ibid*:65).

At the administrative level these individualizing tactics are facilitated through a system of close individual supervision, statistical reports and standardized testing. The individual pupil is set within a population against which his situation can be measured. The teacher must know in intimate detail the particular situation and status of each child. LeMay of the Educational Division of the Department of Indian Affairs outlines at the Oblate workshop "benchmarks" in this regard:

1. Your senior teacher should produce statistical data showing changes in pupil progress. For the next few years you will be required to complete the Age, Grade, Sex Report, the Promotion and Non-promotion Report and the Report on Pupil Withdrawal from school. From these and other reports you may determine the amount of accelerative and retardation existing in the school, the holding power of the school and what is happening to your dropouts. These will be a valuable measure of the effectiveness of educational leadership.
2. Your senior teacher will measure by means of standard tests the changes in pupil mastery of what has been learned. These tests will indicate the levels of achievement.

What we have here, then, is an environment where the individual child is the object of scrutiny by teachers and counsellors both in terms of her own individual circumstances and as she is characterized in relation to the larger population of pupils. Such scrutiny and "guidance" is furthermore undertaken within an atmosphere of paternalistic concern for the ultimate well-being of the child.

The techniques seek to cut through the resistance Aboriginal children had exhibited in reaction to the more Draconian tactics of the past. The power relation becomes much more subtle and sophisticated. Practices of individual attention and guidance within a "family atmosphere"

constructs in the child a feeling of being cared for, generating a situation of trust and security which allows teachers and administrators to reach into the very souls of their prodigies. In a situation of emotional dependency and need for approval, the child becomes far more susceptible to the influence of their leaders; she becomes opened to forces which seek to turn her into a particular kind of subject.

And what this *kind* of subject is, is revealed in the usually unspoken criteria of educational "effectiveness" and notions of pupil "achievement" and "progress." "Doing well" is doing well according to non-Native standards; standards which serve the larger society. The teleological state which the child should reach is clearly that which will harmonize her with her "appropriate" place in Canadian society. What LeMay refers to as the "free goals" toward which students are guided is later given away when he substitutes "necessary goals" and "the making of a wise choice" (*Ibid*:65). The Manual Training offered in elementary school, LeMay reports, "does not aim at forming apprentices or journeymen but at developing in the child an inclination towards work and initiative" (*Ibid*:74). Similarly for girls of this age, home economics training is to develop "the love of the work she will be called upon to perform later in her own home" (*Ibid*:75) and the capacity to manage a household "without always being supervised" (*Ibid*:76). The pleasure principle works with the Aboriginal child to produce this harmony of being.

Clearly the constitutive practices outlined here do not correspond precisely with the chronology of official education policy towards Aboriginal peoples. The point is not this. Indeed many of these procedures had been around for centuries, inspired within the Christian pastoral tradition (Foucault, 1988). The point to be made is simply that, in terms of government relations with Aboriginal peoples, these techniques were converging into universal standardized practice, and were both supported and masked by a growing liberal humanism and its language of rights.

That the procedures of discipline and control outlined in the Oblate manual of 1958 can be situated within a much more widespread phenomenon can be illustrated in two ways. First, these practices are entirely consistent with a reconstruction in education policy that began to be implemented in Upper Canada in the late 1840s, under the guidance of Reverend Egerton Ryerson (Curtis, 1988). Ryerson (who, incidentally, had "cut his teeth as a missionary among the Credit River Indians" (Wilson, 1986:74), sought to move away from the monitorial, rote learning tradition of education. He established and implemented a new blueprint, clearly fuelled by the same kinds of inspirations as the Oblates of 1957. For example, he:

proposed the “inductive” method of education, in which the emotional susceptibility of the child, as well as its simple pleasures, were enlisted in the service of instruction.... Inductive education proceeded by creating an emotional dependency of the child upon the teacher so that the teacher could govern the child with the utmost economy by means of looks, gestures, expressions and qualities of voice. Once such a connection was established, once the “human” qualities of students were developed to a certain point, the teacher could, by his own mobility, deployment and display of energy, draw out the energy of his students in a pleasing and economical manner (109) ...Violence and coercion—the physical display of brutality—would become unnecessary as elements of rule. Rather, rule would proceed through reason and sentiment...(ibid:109)

Emotional involvement, channelling of energies, non-violence—all of these signify the new principles of education. Paralleling precisely the Oblates’ warnings regarding integrated education, this understanding of education promotes that “no negative experiences would take place which would provide students with grounds for resisting the process of education or forming alternative grounds of self-definition” (ibid:109). The point is to harmonize experience and being. Like the Oblate’s objective of inculcating a work ethic, the ultimate goal of Ryerson’s approach is that:

Students were to become self-disciplining individuals who behaved not out of fear or because of coercion, but because their experience at school had created in them certain moral forms for which they had a positive affection (Curtis, 1988:110).

Hence the Oblates’ recommendations conform almost exactly to the prevalent ideas and practices which had developed in Canada in the 1800s, and which had been incorporated into a system of public schooling which serves the broader society. But furthermore, and not surprisingly in light of the subsequent normalization of these procedures, the apparently more “progressive” policies and practices in Aboriginal education which developed after 1946, and particularly with experiments in “Indian control” after 1973, are strikingly consistent with these softer, more constitutive practices of social control.

### **Hawthorne**

*The Hawthorne Report* (1967), a government-commissioned survey of the situation of Indians in Canada, declares attempts to “integrate”

Aboriginal children into the regular schooling system after 1946 as marking the end of an era of paternalism. With the premise that these children should be participating "as equals" and receiving the same educational opportunities as non-Aboriginal children in the provincial schooling system, Hawthorne makes a number of recommendations toward accomplishing this which converge dramatically with those of the Oblates.

First, teachers in the regular school system must learn greater cultural sensitivity in order to deal better with their Aboriginal students. In particular, and consistent with the pleasure principle, they "should cease punishing Indian children for the results of situations they cannot control, such as tardiness, absenteeism, and lack of cleanliness" (*Ibid*:14). The point is to provide an environment which will not distinguish the Aboriginal from the non-Aboriginal student in a negative way, a way which will provoke reaction and withdrawal. The student must be made to feel a valuable part of the school environment.

Secondly, and in accordance with the above, school textbooks should incorporate material "more favourable to Indians." More generally there should be the inclusion of "Indian material for the social studies, art, drama and literature sections of the curriculum" (Hawthorne, 1967:114). Aboriginal culture is something which should be presented respectfully and valorized so that children can "acquire a sense of worth and status" (*Ibid*:14). Again here, respect must be granted to the Aboriginal student by the dominant society. The White educational system must provide positive images and accord positive recognition so that the Aboriginal child can develop pride of self. Self esteem is seen to be that which is lacking in the Aboriginal child and must be developed in him through the caring environment of the larger society.

Thirdly, greater participation of Aboriginal community members should be solicited by involving them in "Home and School Association" and "Indian School Committees," the latter of which are seen as "embryonic school boards which will eventually assume the powers of a provincial school board" (*Ibid*:40). The essential role of the Aboriginal parent is recognized; and since many of Hawthorne's generation now saw the injustice of removing the children from their families, the key is to integrate the families into the non-Aboriginal modes of governing their children. Government must "train...the Indian adult to assume a measure of responsibility in running the affairs of his community" (*Ibid*:85). Hence while Hawthorne abandons the Oblate recommendation to remove Indian children from an un-acculturated Indian family, the move of involving parents is the same as that earlier recommended. The Aboriginal parent must become more like a White parent.

The end state of all these measures, the "ultimate objective" is "the development of the Indians' potentials through education" (*Ibid*:83). While this sounds very benevolent, clearly the educational measures are not neutral in selecting which "potentials" are to be realized. They are those which will allow Aboriginal persons to "become citizens who are better integrated into the Canadian way of life" (*Ibid*:77). The notion that other potentials might be *lost* in this process is not considered.

The continuity between these principles and those put forth by the Oblates is all the more striking in light of Hawthorne's explicit critique of the latter in Aboriginal education. The Report's stress on the Oblates' "savage opposition" to integration policy (*Ibid*:57) is characterized as an "anxiety to maintain the status quo" and resistance to "innovation" (*Ibid*:61). They are criticized as "overzealous...agents of the churches," having "attitudes" which act as a "brake on the development of Indian education through the stress they place on their own privileges" (*Ibid*:62). With such a critique Hawthorne is able to portray the new government policies as following the true path to educational development, as being "open-minded," "innovative," "progressive," pursuing unselfishly the interests of the Aboriginal persons themselves.

Yet what Hawthorne is "open" to, like the Oblates, is the involvement of Aboriginal persons in a schooling system that is structurally non-Aboriginal. He is open to only one form of education, with subtle modifications to make Aboriginal children feel more at home in it. The notion of alternative schooling is not mentioned. Rather, integrated education is implied to be the really "progressive" route. To make Aboriginal peoples "equal" with Whites is to make them equally subject to this particular education, with all of its implicit individualizing tactics, so normal they no longer appear to need any discussion. Similarly, Aboriginal parents are to be "integrated" within this apparently neutral structure of education. Addressing the "special needs" of Aboriginal persons is according them the proper respect within non-Aboriginal society, welcoming them into the fold and making them feel a valuable part of it. All of this is good for Aboriginal peoples because it offers them the same opportunities as Whites to grow up and fit in. Like the Oblates, the perceived interest of the Aboriginal persons and the end state toward which they should strive is to become satisfied, productive members of the dominant society. The critique of the Church's position offered by Hawthorne, then, obscures these fundamental continuities.

### **Self-Government**

The experiments in Aboriginal education which have gone on under the "new" framework of "Indian Control of Indian Education" (National

Indian Brotherhood, 1972), such as those discussed in Barman *et al.*'s 1987 volume, mark an official departure from the "integrationist" policy of the Hawthorne Report. And similar to Hawthorne, they tend to represent themselves in a "progressive" light. Yet in many respects they represent an almost entirely consistent actualization and elaboration of the Report's central recommendations.

The official direction of the approach is potentially far-reaching, as we see in the National Indian Brotherhood Paper where it is stated that "Indian parents must have full responsibility and control," and there must be "full participation and partnership" (National Indian Brotherhood of Canada, 1972:27). While such a vision could indeed entail radical changes to the educational practices for Aboriginal children and parents, and not just a change in the personnel who manage such a system, in practice there has been a widespread acceptance of existing educational norms. Competing conceptions of education are not usually acknowledged, or if they are, it is usually lip service paid to traditional ways (e.g. Barman *et al.*, 1987).

With such little contestation surrounding the concept of education itself, discussion becomes one of "quality" and "efficiency" within established, unexamined criteria. For example, in the case of Aboriginal-controlled Nisga'a education in British Columbia, "quality" is discussed in terms of "more fully qualified, certified teachers," "improving achievement and performance" as measured by dropout rate and age-grade retardation, and "accepting the B.C. core curriculum" (McKays, 1987:74). Like Hawthorne, the Nisga'a as described by McKays sought to bring the education of their children "up to" the same level as that enjoyed by Whites, with little questioning of this standard itself.

Furthermore, since Aboriginal peoples are viewed as having been the object of government action, of having been "educated by" White society, then the actor now must also be the government; there must be "determined and enlightened action on the part of the Federal Government and immediate reform" (National Indian Brotherhood of Canada, 1972:27). Since for so long First Nations peoples have been seen as the powerless victims of government policy, the remedy to such a history of injustice is to give the power back, to grant Aboriginal peoples control of—"education."

This focus on power as if it were entirely centred in the hands of a discrete sovereign entity, which can then be transferred to an Aboriginal sovereign, again has the negative tendency to eclipse the modes in which power operates at the level of micro-practices in education. The ways in which the system works to involve the Aboriginal child in practices of self-discipline, in fostering feelings of pride in the development of cer-

tain characteristics and shame towards others, the modes of testing, observing, rewarding and punishing, are given too little attention. Furthermore, the ways in Aboriginal parents and children have been active in resisting such practices is also eclipsed when they are construed as "victims" of concentrated government power. Their agency does not tend to be recognized unless it operates within the formal, political structure.

The focus on placing formal, educational power in the hands of the appropriate Aboriginal peoples as the chief way of overcoming colonialism, at the expense of the focus on micro-practices of power in the educational process, also has significant consequences for the way in which "culture" is viewed. The goal, of course, is to allow children to be educated in a "culturally sensitive" way. But this greater cultural sensitivity is accomplished, *qua* Hawthorne, through the inclusion of Aboriginal culture in the curriculum. The task becomes to "educate about" Aboriginal culture and heritage (McCaskill, 1987:163), to promote "an awareness of Native culture." And this "culture" is garnered through inclusion of "the" Native perspective on school boards and in curriculum development processes (Douglas, 1987). Native persons can "represent" their culture within the existing educational models. For example, in the case of evaluations, Hebert suggests:

Since values are culturally conditioned, judgements and standards can be made only by knowledgeable persons who are accepted members of the cultural group(s) involved in the evaluand, or others with appropriate cultural experience (1987:241).

Culture, here, is an "object," a clear and discrete "thing," a set of ideas and artifacts which can be "represented" and conveyed through existing educational methods and structures. As an object, it can be enveloped in this way—"included." Hence notions of culture which do not "fit" such a representation tend to be left out. The multiplicity of lived experiences and practices of Aboriginal peoples, which cannot all be represented in objectified form—in the form of the standard school curriculum—are left out.

Some attempts have been made to break somewhat this dichotomy between non-Aboriginal procedures of education on the one hand, and Aboriginal curricula and teacher content on the other. Exposure to traditional Elders, who manifest different ways of being and have alternative teaching methods (Medicine, 1987), the taking of children out of the school and into the country for fishing and hunting (e.g. Williams and Wyatt, 1987), have been attempted. But these seem, for the most part, to be largely peripheral activities.

More significantly, in discussions of core-curricula there is virtual silence regarding the individualizing effects of mainstream teaching techniques discussed here earlier. For example, there seems to have been little experimentation with teaching methods that might reflect and support the more communitarian subjectivity of Aboriginal peoples. One article does discuss the notion of "communal tests," whereby all students in the class participate together in finding the right answers, as a realizable procedure (Van Horn, 1983). Ironically such an idea was stumbled upon by accident, because the students—from a Micmac Reserve—were unable to fathom the idea of "cheating." Certainly practices of this nature have not been central to experiments in Aboriginal education.

The "needs" that Aboriginal education is meant to serve in children invariably include the generation of "self-esteem," "identity," a "positive self-image," "self-reliance," the promotion of an "authentic, unbiased, non-stereotypical Indian culture" (McCaskill, 1987:162), the opportunity "to lead productive lives" and "to choose their way of life" (Williams and Wyatt, 1987:212). From merely the needs of the Aboriginal person for non-Aboriginal education under old assimilation policy, what we have under these "humanistic" practices is the extension of concern for the welfare of the Aboriginal person into her heart and mind. It is for her happiness, her self esteem, her sense of worth as a person and as a productive member of the community, her self realization as a free, rights-bearing being that we now concern ourselves. These particular psychosocial needs have increasingly become targets of modern schooling procedures.

The problem here is that the pride to be inculcated and the self to be esteemed are far from neutral; they are rather those which will fit one into the mainstream. Expressed more explicitly by the Oblates, yet still implied here, this individual is one that will serve the system. Fulfillment of needs, realization of potential are measured according to the progressive acquisition of the "standard education," with its standard modes of being, including "good" "healthy" behaviours of attendance, discipline, and motivation. While the integrationist model differs in its attempt to promote the idea of a traditional Aboriginal culture in order to instill pride of self, the Aboriginal qualities in which one takes pride include only those aspects which are already reified by, or at least non-threatening to, the hegemonic subjectivity—self-reliance, individual freedom, a glorious past, and so on. It is the generation of esteem in *this* self which provides the energy that harmonizes one with fulfilment of one's role as a "good" citizen.



## **Conclusion**

What I have attempted to argue here is that "paternalism," far from characterizing simply the relations between Natives and the Canadian government during a particular and clearly demarcated historical epoch, is rather a principle of governing relations that pervades the society, implicated wherever one finds relations of hierarchy—in families, schools, universities, hospitals, the workplace, and so on. It is in and through these relations that the construction of a self-governing subjectivity according to the hegemonic standards of motivation and achievement occurs.

One should not consider the case of Aboriginal peoples as one where individuals are treated in particular ways because of their Aboriginal "being," but as groups who were individualized in a multiplicity of ways, yet always in and through that Aboriginal being. It has been their designation as "Indians" that has permitted the undertaking of individualizing attempts such as those discussed here—the disciplinary practices that are so integral to becoming a "good" Canadian citizen. Rather than merely targeting an Aboriginal "substance," these practices serve to construct the very subject that would contain such a substance. They are practices of the same nature as those which subjectify us all.

Hence Hawthorne's self-congratulatory premise that paternalism met its historical demise with the implementation of a more "progressive" government policy in 1946, or the idea that the real solution to assimilationist tendencies lies in the transferral of formal sovereignty from non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal governing bodies, is highly problematic. While certainly Aboriginal peoples are participating "as equals" and are "taking control," the equal with whom they participate and the system of which they take control are clearly and indisputably non-Aboriginal. The unreflective promotion of Aboriginal persons in positions of leadership traditionally filled by Whites, such as teachers, social workers, and policemen, ignores the enormous colonizing potential of these persons. It forgets that precisely such tactics were historically used in an age of explicit colonialism against Aboriginal peoples (e.g. Hagan, 1966). Far from a radical democratization, it threatens to be a mere "browning" of an already existent system.

All of this is not to dispute the idea of Aboriginal sovereignty in educational structure as essential to constructing genuine change. Clearly the control of the purse strings, with their rigid procedural guidelines of accountability, by federal and provincial governments has a limiting effect on the realization of truly different kinds of education. Nor do I wish to suggest that non-Aboriginal structures cannot be used as vehicles

for change by Aboriginal people. Clearly these are important sites of struggle. The shattering of this particular paternalistic bond with the Aboriginal takeover of governing structures has indeed been an important emancipatory step.

The point here is also not that a completely alternative and non-oppressive set of educational practices can be conjured up out of Aboriginal memory and implemented in the contemporary situation. There is clearly no utopian space to which we can move. We must rather start from where we are, working with the tools available to us. The decision of the James Bay Crees in their self-government agreement to combine the southern educational system with some Aboriginal innovations is indicative of the reality of this situation (Diamond, 1987).

Yet my major argument remains: the focus on sovereignty and the fight for Aboriginal "representation" seems too much to have taken place to the neglect of the minutiae of educational practices—to the patterns of paternalism, the assumption upon which they rest, and the constituting effects they have. Without attending to these micro-practices, Aboriginal sovereignty promises to promote a similar system of governmentality which, for the most part, is merely getting more entrenched and more effective in its browning.

Challenges to educational norms must be made. Aboriginal communities, if they really wish to be self determining, must question the selves they are becoming, as does Bob Overvold:

Having gone through practically all levels of formal schooling—elementary, junior high, senior high, and post-secondary—I suppose I would be classified as the product of what the system of the past 20 years turned out. I don't know how pleased my parents are with the 'product' but certainly I don't like it...I have become almost totally conditioned to fit into southern society. On the other hand, what these many years have taken away from me has caused irrevocable damage to me as a Dene: it has caused a split between my parents and myself that may never be healed; it has caused me to lose my Dene language; and, most significantly, it has left me in somewhat of a limbo—not quite fitting into Dene society and not quite fitting into white society (in Watkins, 1977:147).

Such questioning does not mean that all of modern liberalism and all of White society must be rejected. On the contrary, it is by critically reflecting on the forces around us, and on what we would like to become, that the principle of autonomy central to the liberal tradition has the best hope of being realized.<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge of Aboriginal traditions and exposure to different ways of being within Aboriginal communities can help to de-normalize the educational practices of the dominant society and the subjectivities they help to create. Such knowledge and exposure offer resources from which First Nations people can engage self-consciously in alternative practices of the self. And it may be this kind of engagement that is essential to retrieving what is most precious, and has most been damaged, in "The Great Barbecue" of North American history.<sup>3</sup>

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### Notes

1. The Miller collection, *Sweet Promises* (1991), is exceptional in refusing to see the Aboriginal persons purely in the role of historical victims.
2. I mean autonomy not in the domesticated sense it has taken on in contemporary American political philosophy, notably the thought of John Rawls, but in the original sense in which we find it in Rousseau, Kant and Hegel.
3. For this phrase I am indebted to Frank Underhill who borrows it himself from Parrington (Underhill, 1960:17).

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