

**Ways of knowing: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada**

Student

Institution

Professor

Course

Date

### **Ways of knowing: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada**

This article takes a look at the many different factors that have shaped the lives of Native Canadians over the years. The book is broken up into four parts: Philosophy and Worldview; History; Political Economy; and Current Issues. Belanger includes new chapters on Native philosophy, linguistics, art, and literature, as well as writing about Native American history and issues, in addition to the areas often covered in current works like health, politics, identity, and urban reserves. As well as meeting students' demands, this text provides an academic assessment of the ways in which Native Canadians have reflected on the past four centuries of contact with the outside world. It also sheds light on the social, political, and economic issues that Native American community leaders and their constituents face across the country. Belanger does not romanticize Native Americans. Instead, the book sets the historical tale in its proper context and shows how the past has influenced contemporary developments in areas as diverse as self-governance, urban reserve development, culture, and health. This book is one of a kind since it introduces Native topics from an academic standpoint while yet being written in an accessible narrative style for pupils at the lower level.

The methods of knowledge are explored in Chapter 1. As the chapter explains, it is challenging in today's American society, and particularly in the vastly systematized setting of a higher learning institution, to grasp the expressive and intellectual conception of a landscape from which an individual may draw both spiritual and physical sustenance. In this chapter, we saw why it is so important to seek equilibrium in a universe "driven by continual interrelationships between spirit and matter," or a universe that is always changing (Belanger, 2018). To keep things in check, all living things must give and take power with one another, a process described as "a dynamic process of ongoing adjustment that help people maintain a variety of interactions and hence sustain community peace." For Indigenous peoples, the background of trying to grasp "the complicated nature of environmental factors and their

interrelationships" is crucial. When we make changes to the world around us, we disturb the delicate balance established by many interdependencies. Disrupting the web of all a person's connections has the potential to throw Creation into chaos because of the resulting imbalances. Through time, these connections have promoted the need to establish comprehensive, sacred methods to thinking grounded on observable reality, embracing values like respect and reciprocity. The result was the development of culturally relevant teaching strategies that spread knowledge from older generations to the next generation.

For instance, Native science's core tenets can be found in the worldviews of the vast majority of North American Indigenous peoples, giving rise to rich explanations of the world. Different societies have used these philosophical principles to develop their own distinct perspectives on the world. Given this common ground, it is not surprising to find certain continuities in the moral codes practiced by Indigenous tribes across North America. Indigenous cultures' political, economical, and social systems have always been informed by this Native worldview. To comprehend Indigenous peoples' responses to preponderant ecological factors, both natural and anthropogenic, it is necessary to grasp these fundamental notions. At the same time, Native leaders are shaped by the Native point of view, and it is important to get a grasp on these concepts if you want to fully grasp the magnitude of Aboriginal self-government or the reasons Native communities struggle so hard to keep control of education.

## Chapter two

Land and Indigenous Political Economy are the main topics of this section. Belanger demonstrates how Indigenous peoples have been categorized using metrics that evaluate progress in Western-style societies. More so, Native people born in the West during the height of the Industrialization face the challenges of a Western setting. The upshot was that many people thought Indigenous communities were primitive societies at best, or at least on the verge

of becoming civilized. Economists viewed these people groups as little more than nomadic hunters and gatherers, with no industry beyond subsistence agriculture. Political metrics were developed to differentiate societies according to the level of development of their social ideologies; again, Western institutions were used as the yardstick (Belanger, 2018). As a result, progress among Canada's indigenous communities is still evaluated against Western standards. What is missing from these policies is any indication that they were inspired by or represent an Indigenous worldview. Few studies have focused on the economic and political tenets that underpinned most societies, with the exception of those conducted on the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Native American elders and other prominent community members whose remarks would have shed light on Native American culture for Westerners if they had been contacted properly are also absent. All of this contributes to the fact that the tone set by academics and politicians when discussing Native peoples is firmly rooted in the colonial mindset that has always "caught" Indigenous culture.

Aboriginal worldviews, awareness, languages, and order, for example, emerged out of an ecological environment as individuals encountered the dynamics of an ecosystem. The elders' requests for a return to Aboriginal belief systems, languages, expertise, and order necessitate a re-evaluation of the ecological setting in which these ideas originally emerged. Such an investigation necessitates taking cues from the natural world, just as our forebears did, and also drawing on the wisdom of our elders.

Politically, tribal peoples incorporate all kinds of life into their evidence collection from the very beginning. As a result, tribal peoples' notions have to be much more exact and summon substantially more evidence. Their arguments need to be made in a form that can be understood by other sentient beings, not only humans.

Indigenous economics demonstrates how to deal with the economy in a way that is holistic, mutually beneficial, and respectful to people, other species, and the natural order of

things. The author demonstrates that the prevailing views on how to efficiently produce, distribute, trade, and consume goods and services emerged naturally out of their ecological setting. Indigenous North American societies did not place a premium on wealth generation or materialistic progress via the accumulation of personal fortune or through the promotion of entrepreneurialism or wage labor as did the earliest European settlers. Some Plains people kept big herds of horses, while people in Northwest Coast civilizations accumulated vast quantities of items, which they distributed in a spectacular ritual called a potlatch. Accumulation in both cases had the potential to, and actually did, lead to political clout.

Land cannot be bought by Indians but can be shared among them. Unlike humans, "all my relations" do not have to sell their stake in the land in order to prevent its sale. The importance of lands to Indigenous economic and political growth is immeasurable. Having access to the property meant more than just having a place to sleep at night. It was the source of all life and gave us the necessities for survival (Belanger, 2018). Different regional forms of government and economic ideologies emerged as a result of different area inhabitants' interactions and relationships with the land. The land, or specific parcels of land, served as the central organizing principle for the Indigenous mind, providing a pivotal point of reference from which Indigenous countries might develop. In addition to subsistence activities like gathering and hunting indigenous groups built sophisticated economies on the backs of their in-depth understanding of agriculture, animal migratory patterns, climate cycles, and intercommunity commerce. This promoted not only a sense of belonging, but also the economic and political tactics vital to long-term viability in a given ecological setting.

### Conclusion

Performance is highly valued in indigenous intellectual traditions, whether as a means of expressing individuality or collective identity, providing opportunities for entertainment or artistic expression, or all of the above. They also need viewers to grapple with complex and

abstract notions, such as Thomas King's views on Indigenous narrative traditions and the present Native self-government movement and Native health and wellbeing, all of which can be challenging to comprehend and understand. Criticisms on the factors impacting Native communities are inevitable, as is the case with any expression of self and community.

## Reference

Belanger, Y. D. (2018). *Ways of knowing: An introduction to Native studies in Canada*.

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