Indigenism, Pan-Indigenism and Cosmovisionism

Mantilla, Martha E.

Published by Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials

Mantilla, Martha E.
Indigenism, Pan-Indigenism and Cosmovisionism: The Confluence of Indigenous Thought in the Americas.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/110100.

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Bibliotecas, archivos, manuscritos y tesauros del conocimiento indígena
1. The Interinstitutional Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge (ICIK) at Penn State

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Abstract
This paper explores the history of the Interinstitutional Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge (ICIK), and its efforts to promote the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in academic research and teaching, through its seminars, workshops, newsletters, immersion courses, and the new Student Society for Indigenous Knowledge (SSIK). It also examines the Marjorie Grant Whiting Endowment that supports efforts such as the video series, AcademiK Connections, which illustrates how faculty and students employ indigenous knowledge in their teaching and research activities. The endowment funded an Indigenous Knowledge Showcase in 2012 that has led to indigenous knowledge collaborations between Penn State University and the Smithsonian Institution. These partnerships are being developed through the combined efforts of ICIK; Dr. Eva Pell, the Smithsonian’s Undersecretary for Science; and its staff of researchers, curators, archivists and librarians.

To our knowledge, ICIK is the only global indigenous knowledge resource center in the United States. Founded in 1995 by Penn State University (PSU) faculty, Ladislaus Semali from the College of Education, and Audrey Maretzki from the College of Agricultural Sciences, ICIK became the latest indigenous knowledge resource center to join the extensive network of centers initiated by Dr. Michael Warren. Many of these indigenous knowledge (IK) resource centers were located in African and Asian universities and research institutions and they functioned much like the Center for Indigenous Knowledge in Agriculture and Rural Development (CIKARD), established by Dr. Warren at his home institution, Iowa State University.

Since its inception, ICIK has attempted to bring together faculty, students, and townspeople interested in local knowledge generated outside the academy.

The goal of ICIK is to bring this community-generated knowledge into the academy, making “in-reach” to colleges and universities from communities as relevant to the academy as its own outreach directed to such communities. ICIK sees its role as encouraging academics to undertake collaborative indigenous knowledge research that engages local communities; provides opportunities for faculty, students, and townspeople to share their indigenous knowledge activities with interested others and to collaborate with one another in areas of common interest.

**Indigenous Knowledge in the Academy**

ICIK’s activities are wide ranging, including a LISTSERV with approximately eight hundred subscribers from around the globe; an electronic newsletter (ICIK E-News) that is published three times a year and archived on the ICIK website; and workshops, conferences, and a monthly seminar series that highlights the IK research of Penn State faculty, students, and visitors. The interest in indigenous knowledge spans the various PSU campuses and curricula. Many faculty members from the Penn State system have presented in the seminar series, which reflects the importance of indigenous knowledge research at a number of institutes. These include the College of Medicine’s Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine, the new Polar Center, the American Indian Leadership Program, and the Alliance for Education, Science, Engineering and Development in Africa (AESEDA). Many ICIK programs are co-sponsored by organizations such as Penn State’s Center for Global Studies, and the Centre County United Nations Association.

ICIK also sponsors a course titled “Indigenous Ways of Knowing in the North American Context,” which is a prerequisite to the three-week, award-winning cultural engagement course: “Exploring Indigenous Ways of Knowing of the Ojibwe.” These courses are currently offered during the spring and “Maymester” sessions, by the College of Agricultural Sciences’ Community, Environment and Development program, in collaboration with the Department of Sociology’s The World in Conversation, Penn State Continuing Education, and the Penn State Libraries. For the past ten years, the Ojibwe course has been led by Dr. Bruce Martin in cooperation with elders, educators, and community leaders from the Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Nations in Northern Minnesota. Students spend three weeks exploring the history, culture, and spiritual values of the Ojibwe people through direct participation in important ceremonies such as the sacred drum ceremony, pow-wow, and sweat lodge; through conversations with medicine men, artisans, and political leaders; and by living with a family on the reservation. In 2012, students met with Dennis Banks, founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM); Anne M. Dunne, Ojibwe elder, storyteller, and expert on Ojibwe oral tradition; Dr. Anton Treuer, author and Ojibwe language professor at Bemidji State University; and Medicine Men Richard and Dennis Morrison. Other activities included visits
to the White Earth Land Recovery Project, initiated by Dr. Winona LaDuke, author, activist, and twice a US vice-presidential candidate; a trip to the St. Regis Superfund Site in Cass Lake, where much of the land is still off limits and enclosed by a locked fence; and a canoe expedition in the headwaters of the Mississippi.1

Students who took the course have affirmed its value, stating that it provided them with a new understanding of a culture with a distinctly different worldview. As a result of this course, the university libraries have acquired two stone sculptures by the renowned Ojibwe artist Gordon van Wert, which are now on display in the Leisure Reading Room of the Pattee Library. The first sculpture, *The Sentinel*, was presented to the 2012 class by the Tribal Chairman of the Red Lake Nation. The second, *The Night Messenger*, was a direct gift from the artist to the libraries.

The Whiting Endowment for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledge at Penn State was created in 2008 with a $50,000 gift from the Marjorie Grant Whiting Center for Humanity, Arts and the Environment. The Whiting Center increased the endowment to $100,000 in 2009. The endowment honors the legacy of Marjorie Grant Whiting, a nutritional anthropologist and ethno botanist who was a visiting scholar in the Penn State Department of Nutritional Sciences. Dr. Whiting’s investigation of the neuromuscular Guam disease among the Chamorro of the Mariana Islands, focused on the way households processed the cycad plant, the principal food of this indigenous culture. Dr. Whiting’s research papers are archived at the University of Hawaii’s Hamilton Library on the Manoa Campus.2

The endowment is now housed in the Penn State Libraries and the dispersal of its accrued interest is guided by the M. G. Whiting Endowment Faculty Advisory Committee. The endowment may be used to enhance indigenous knowledge at PSU by supporting activities that include developing interdisciplinary courses; funding indigenous knowledge-related research, education and outreach efforts of faculty and students; and supporting visiting scholars and lecturers.3 In 2013 the endowment awarded its first student indigenous knowledge research awards, supporting projects involving immigrant populations in New York City and on local seed dispersal systems in Ghana.

The Whiting Endowment also helped to fund AcademIK Connections, a series of twelve videos that illustrate how faculty and students employ indigenous knowledge in their teaching, outreach, and research activities.4 The series includes a video featuring the work of rural sociologist, Carolyn Sachs, describing her failure to understand the importance of “weeds” that female farmers in Africa allowed to grow in their maize fields, until she learned that they were cooked to “keep the family healthy.” In other videos, Ghanaian Clemente Abrokwaa illustrates the role of music in maintaining the tempo of daily life in traditional African villages. Fran Osseo-Asare presents both the simplicity and complexity of the regional cuisines of Africa. Bruce
Martin contrasts English, a language of nouns, with the Ojibwe language of verbs, highlighting the importance to the Anishinaabe of building relationships among people, animals, plants, rocks, and sacred places.

**ICIK and the Libraries**

In 2010, ICIK approached the Penn State Social Sciences Library and proposed a partnership aimed at raising the visibility of ICIK and indigenous knowledge across the university, to which the library quickly agreed. By partnering, ICIK hoped to leverage the staff, facilities, and resources of the university libraries to expand its reach. In three years this partnership has grown to include many units of the libraries including Public Relations and Marketing, MediaTech, Cataloging, and Development. There have also been many opportunities for the librarians to work with other faculty and organizations to spread the word about ICIK.

**The CIKARD Collection**

CIKARD—The Center for Indigenous Knowledge for Agriculture and Rural Development—was established at Iowa State University (ISU) in October 1987 as part of its Technology and Social Change Program. CIKARD’s goal was to collect indigenous knowledge and make it available to development professionals and scientists. The center concentrated on indigenous knowledge systems, such as local soil taxonomies; decision-making systems, such as knowledge of which crops are best suited to particular types of soils; organizational structures, such as farmers’ problem-solving groups; and innovations, such as local methods for pest control.

In the fall of 1988, a documentation unit and library were formally established as a part of CIKARD in order to serve the center in its effort to record, analyze, and disseminate indigenous knowledge for agriculture and rural development. One of the unit’s major objectives was to identify and acquire all relevant literature, ethnographic descriptions of indigenous knowledge, and associated disciplines from worldwide sources. Dr. Michael Warren was the director of the center until his untimely death in December 1997.

In the spring of 2010, upon being informed that Iowa State University was looking to relocate the collection, the ICIK co-directors contacted the Penn State University Libraries to see if they were interested in acquiring CIKARD’s material. After some discussion with ISU, a deed of gift was signed and the collection was transferred to the State College campus that summer. There are over two thousand items in the collection, including but not limited to books, government reports, dissertations, and conference proceedings. The titles that have already been added to the Libraries’ collection may be accessed by going to: http://cat.libraries.psu.edu, and typing CIKARD in the search box. A list of 186 titles will appear.
The ICIK Seminar Series and Conferences

The monthly seminar series, which began in 1995, was one of the first collaborative efforts between the Libraries and ICIK. These seminars have brought together practitioners, students, faculty, and visiting scholars to discuss the role indigenous knowledge plays in addressing key societal issues. The seminars were originally held over the lunch hour in a classroom building, hampered by limited space and the need to accommodate course schedules. While the seminar speakers are invited by Dr. Audrey Maretzki, ICIK Co-Director, the Libraries provide a centrally-located venue and state-of-the-art equipment for presenters. We also enlist the help of the University Libraries Public Relations and Marketing Department (PRAMs) to advertise the seminars more broadly, and use a media-equipped room in the Social Sciences Library. The move to this library facility has enabled the seminars to be transmitted through Adobe Connect, which allows anyone with an internet connection—including those at the twenty-four other Penn State campuses across the state and global users—to view the presentations, hear the presenter, and submit questions through a chat window. The PRAMs marketing efforts were so successful that we quickly outgrew the social sciences facility—which can comfortably seat twenty-five people—and moved to the Libraries’ larger Foster Auditorium, where Penn State’s Media Site Live technology can be used to broadcast live streaming audio and video, as well as to include speakers from other locations via Skype. Media Site Live also has a chat function that allows viewers to interact with presenters. While we do not know where all of our virtual attendees are from, follow-up e-mails from a few tell us that people have watched from as far away as Ecuador and Australia. All seminar presentations are archived on the ICIK website for later viewing.

Since the seminar series moved to the library in 2010, over twenty-six seminars have been held on topics as diverse as the use of medicinal mushrooms in Ethiopia, cultural concepts of aging in Spain, the traditional use of cow dung in rural India, indigenous tourism in Ecuador, and birthing practices in Uganda.

We are currently working on a project to convert the PowerPoint presentations that were given prior to the move to the libraries, to a format that can be mounted on the ICIK website. Care is being taken to ensure that presentations will meet current web accessibility standards. In addition to the regular monthly seminars, the Libraries co-sponsor workshops, conferences, and retreats that focus on indigenous knowledge issues.

The ICIK Website

ICIK maintains a website that has highlighted its activities since 2004. The website was originally designed by staff in the College of Education, but inadequate resources made it a challenge to keep the site current. In 2011,
the website was redesigned and moved to the university libraries where more resources could be devoted to its upkeep. The website promotes the initiatives of ICIK, highlights many collaborations between ICIK and the libraries, and is regularly updated during the academic year with the help of student library interns. Some additions to the website since the move include: descriptions of the aforementioned seminars, a complete archive of *ICIK E-News*, the CIKARD bibliography, a bibliography of indigenous knowledge research publications by subscribers to the ICIK listserv, the Marjorie Grant Whiting Center’s archive, and a guide to indigenous knowledge research materials in the university libraries.

**Student Involvement**

ICIK has always had close connections with faculty and graduate students at various Penn State campuses but, in recent years, more emphasis has been placed on reaching out to undergraduate students and involving them in indigenous knowledge activities. In addition to the numerous graduate students who have presented at ICIK seminars and the Ojibwe course, there have been a number of other initiatives drawing students into indigenous knowledge activities.

In fall 2011, a group of undergraduates formed the Student Society for Indigenous Knowledge (SSIK), which became an official Penn State student organization in spring 2012. They meet regularly, actively recruit student members, conduct programs, take part in ICIK seminars, and raise the awareness of other students, most of whom have never heard about indigenous knowledge in their classes.

Since 2010, the university libraries have sponsored six paid internships for undergraduate students who work in the libraries on ICIK related projects. Supervised by librarians, these interns have maintained the website, assisted in processing the CIKARD collection, and helped write and produce promotional material for the seminars and other programs. Four additional unpaid interns have been supervised by the ICIK co-director. Students have worked on a variety of projects, including promoting SSIK activities through social media, creating bibliographies, and writing *ICIK E-news* articles. In the 2014–2015 academic year, we will again be offering several students the opportunity to work with ICIK and the libraries.

**Reaching beyond Penn State**

**Ethiopia**

In October 2010, in our capacity as Penn State librarians and ICIK members, two of us had the opportunity to travel to Ethiopia to attend the AgKnowledge Africa Share Fair in Addis Ababa. In this forum, focusing specifically on the importance of indigenous knowledge in development, we
described our efforts to form a global center for indigenous knowledge at PSU, talked about ICIK, and encouraged attendees to join its listserv. We also traveled to Mekele University in northern Ethiopia to meet with faculty, students, and librarians to speak about indigenous knowledge resources, and opportunities for Penn State to partner with institutions in Ethiopia. Since that time, the libraries have continued these international efforts. We are currently working with an Ethiopian entrepreneur to develop training materials for women’s groups who produce nutritious, culturally appropriate foods using indigenous crops.

United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) Poster Presentation

USAIN is an organization for information professionals. It provides a forum for the discussion of agricultural issues, takes a leadership role in the formation of a national information policy as related to agriculture, makes recommendations to the National Agricultural Library on information matters, and promotes cooperation and communication among its members. In May 2012, Pennsylvania State University’s Amy Paster and Helen Smith attended the 13th Biennial USAIN Conference and presented a poster describing the acquisition and processing of the CIKARD collection, the work to enhance its access, and the collaborative projects developing between the libraries and Penn State’s indigenous knowledge community.

ICIK Affiliates

To our knowledge, Penn State is currently the only institution of higher education with a formal commitment to integrating indigenous knowledge into the teaching, research, and outreach functions of the academy. To advance this effort, ICIK has recently initiated a process to offer other interested institutions a formal affiliation with ICIK at Penn State. The College of New Jersey is now an ICIK affiliate, and institutional affiliations are pending with University of Missouri, Columbia, Waterloo University in Canada, and the Jaypee Institute of Information Technology (JIIT) in India. Criteria for becoming an ICIK affiliate are available at the ICIK website.8

Community Collaboration

ICIK also makes a considerable effort to reach out to community groups and has a strong relationship with organizations such as the Centre County United Nations Association (CCUNA), with which it often co-sponsors programs. An example of these programs was the fall 2012 seminar on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, co-sponsored by ICIK, CCUNA, and Penn State’s American Indian Leadership Program (AILP). ICIK also draws members of the community to its programs and seminars as both audience and speakers. For instance, Dr. Campbell Plowden,
Director of State College’s nonprofit Center for Amazon Community Ecology, has reported on his innovative work in the Peruvian Amazon at both ICIK and CCUNA events.

*The ICIK Showcase and the Smithsonian Institution*

In October 2012, the Whiting Endowment supported the “Indigenous Knowledge Showcase,” at which the aforementioned Dr. Eva Pell, Under-secretary for Science at the Smithsonian Institution, presented the keynote address: “Indigenous Knowledge in the Academy.” A collaboration between Penn State and the Smithsonian Institution is developing through the combined efforts of ICIK, Dr. Pell, and the Smithsonian staff. So far, five interest groups have been formed, which include thirty-five PSU faculty and graduate students and ten Smithsonian staff. The groups are facilitated by Smithsonian staff from the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), the National Museum of African Art (NMAA), the Smithsonian’s Center for Understanding and Sustaining a Biodiverse Planet, and the Smithsonian Libraries.

NMAI’s Doug Herman, a senior geographer, described his work on indigenous geography on a conference call with Penn State researchers. In addition, in September 2013, he conducted a workshop at University Park and taught thirty interested faculty and students how to use his innovative matrix to describe, compare, and contrast indigenous communities. The new Polar Center at Penn State is planning to invite Igor Krupnik, an Arctic ethnographer with the NMNH, to present his research on indigenous communities and climate change. Meredith Doran, from Penn State’s Department of Linguistics, has been invited by Ruth Rouvier, linguistic anthropologist at NMNH, to engage with the Smithsonian’s Recovering Voices Project. William Dewey and Perkins Foss, PSU faculty in art history, have proposed to work with Karen Milbourne at the NMAA to create an exhibit of African art and artifacts that would travel to some of Penn State’s Commonwealth Campuses. From the Penn State libraries’ perspective, one concrete outcome was the 2013 SALALM conference, which brought together librarians from Penn State and the Smithsonian in the first of what we hope will be many joint programs that will take place in the next few years. We have also discussed possible internships at the Smithsonian for Penn State librarians. We were pleased that Elayne Silversmith, NMAI Vine Deloria Librarian, was able to co-present with Penn State colleagues at the 2013 SALALM Conference, and has subsequently been invited by the AILP program to visit Penn State.

*Future Initiatives*

*Identifying and Supporting IK Research and Teaching at Penn*

In January 2014, Helen Sheehy began a six-month sabbatical, portions of which were devoted to surveying Penn State faculty to gauge the level of
research and teaching related to indigenous knowledge across the twenty-four PSU campuses. The project also explores a model for preserving the results of that research as a collection within the libraries’ new digital repository. Ultimately, it is our hope that the digital repository can be expanded beyond Penn State to researchers who collaborate with PSU, and eventually beyond that, to the global community of ICIK affiliates. One of those may be Insight2Lead, whose CEO has invited ICIK at Penn State to collaborate on the design and implementation of an Indigenous Knowledge Systems Center in South Africa’s Gauteng Province. South Africa has incorporated IK into its post-apartheid constitution and sees it as a cornerstone for its social and economic development.

CIKARD Collection Expansion

In September 2013, Amy Paster began a six-month sabbatical in order to complete the processing of the CIKARD collection. Although the original collection was organized by a simple accession number and was not associated with the Iowa State Library, the libraries are now fully cataloging many items and adding a gift note to the record. Items not appropriate—such as articles, draft copies of reports, etc.—will be retained in the CIKARD archives with a collection level code. The original online bibliography was organized into eleven broad subject categories, and was only available through the Internet Archive. We are adding all items to an online bibliography with a link to full text if possible. Otherwise, links will go to the journal article information or to a WorldCat record.

UNESCO and Penn State

Penn State is fortunate to have Dr. Mark Brennan, the newly-appointed UNESCO Chair in Rural Community Leadership and Youth Development, on its faculty. He has a deep interest in indigenous knowledge and the role it plays in community development. In the spring of 2013, ICIK, the PSU libraries, and Dr. Brennan began discussing potential ways to collaborate. Dr. Brennan hopes for an institute focusing on international development at Penn State. If that hope comes to fruition, we expect that some of its resources might focus on preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge.

ICIK within the Libraries

Lastly, we discuss the possibility of bringing indigenous knowledge under the administration of the university libraries. There is some precedent for this at Penn State: the Pennsylvania Center for the Book resides with the university libraries and is administered by members of the libraries’ faculty. We are currently working with a number of groups on campus to create a Census Restricted Data Center that will also find its home in the Penn State University Libraries, but that initiative is waiting for final National Science Foundation
funding. Certainly, housing ICIK—an institution dedicated to the preservation of indigenous knowledge—within a library, whose sole mission is the preservation of knowledge, is intuitively logical. Long-term, the libraries can develop the staff and infrastructure to support indigenous knowledge and ICIK going into the future. And, in the often territorial world of academe, libraries are a place where scholars across disciplines may come together. Though there will be costs, we do not believe they are insurmountable. Our administration supports the idea, in principle, and has asked us to develop a proposal.

**Conclusion**

Much has been achieved in the three years that the Penn State University Libraries have partnered with ICIK. There have been many opportunities for research and outreach. Administering ICIK within the libraries is the next logical step in expanding the growth, reach, and importance of indigenous knowledge in the academy.

Issues addressed earlier involve leveraging the depth of the libraries’ indigenous knowledge resources. The ICIK collaboration has grown from working within one subject library to doing so across all the libraries. Housing interns in both the Social Sciences and Life Sciences libraries, is an example of internal interdisciplinary programming. The interns have already come from the College of Education, as well as the College of Agricultural Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts. Because of the raised awareness of indigenous knowledge, subject selectors are more likely to purchase materials on this topic. At the request of the Whiting Center’s board of directors to relocate the Whiting Endowment, the Development Office is now involved. PRAMs plays an important role in marketing various seminars and special events. Technical Services is heavily involved in the cataloging of the CIKARD collection and the audiovisual support team handles Media Site Live and presentations that utilize Skype. Within the Penn State University Libraries, indigenous knowledge has become a topic not only of interest but also of involvement. ICIK hopes that, likewise, indigenous knowledge will become a commonly employed and widely accepted term of reference and a focus of activity within the entire academy.

**NOTES**

1. Dr. Truer is the Executive Director of the American Indian Resource Center, Bemidji State University. A scholar of the Ojibwe language, he is the author of thirteen books about the Anishinaabe people and has been instrumental in efforts to textualize the Ojibwe language and in the development of language immersion programs. Winona LaDuke, an enrolled member of the White Earth Tribe, is an American Indian activist, rural economist, environmentalist, and writer. In 1996 and 2000 she was the vice-presidential candidate with Ralph Nader on the Green Party ticket. The St. Regis Superfund site is contaminated from former wood pressure treatment operations.

3. Additional information on the Marjorie Grant Whiting Endowment is available on the ICIK website, http://icik.psu.edu/psul/icik/ICIKendowment.html.

4. AcademIK Connections is a series of videos from the Penn State College of Engineering’s Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship (HESE) Program, on the ways indigenous knowledge can address challenges facing the world today (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL61AFA3EF180F626C). Funding support was provided by the Interinstitutional Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge (ICIK) and the Marjorie Grant Whiting Endowment for Indigenous Knowledge Advancement.


7. “AgKnowledge Africa.” Further information on the conference, including links to video clips, can be found at the conference wiki, http://agknowledgeafrica.wikispaces.com.

