

# Wasi'chu

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*Wasi'chu* is the Lakota and Dakota (known collectively as the Sioux) word for people of non-indigenous descent,<sup>[1]</sup> with derogatory connotations. It expresses the native population's perception of the non-Natives' relationship with the land and the native population. Typically it refers to white people,<sup>[2]</sup> but does not specifically mention skin color or race. The term "black wasichu" has been historically used to describe a person of African descent, and a Native American who adopted non-Native ways could "make himself over into a wasichu."<sup>[3]</sup>

"Wasicun" means non-Indian.<sup>[1]</sup> The Lakota word for "taking the fat" (*wasin icu*)<sup>[2]</sup> is spelled and pronounced similarly, and it is used by natives in puns to refer to non-Natives who rob tribes of their resources.<sup>[1]</sup>

In Dakota, *Wasi'cu* also means the English language.<sup>[4]</sup>

## In popular culture

Oglala Lakota leader Black Elk (1863—1950) used the term freely in his book, *Black Elk Speaks*, referring to European-Americans who spoke dishonestly.

"Wasichu" is a fifth season episode of the television series *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, about a lobbyist and Indian gaming.<sup>[5]</sup>

Washichu is also a rock band from New Orleans, Louisiana.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a*</sup> <sup>*b*</sup> <sup>*c*</sup> Setting the Record Straight About Native Languages: Wasichu. (<http://www.native-languages.org/iaq20.htm>) *Native Languages of the Americas*. (retrieved 23 Jan 2011)
- <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a*</sup> <sup>*b*</sup> Simcikova, 88
- <sup>^</sup> Staub 62
- <sup>^</sup> LaFontaine and McKay, 145
- <sup>^</sup> "Wasichu (#5.14)." (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0629601/>) *Internet Movie Database*. (retrieved 23 Jan 2011)
- <sup>^</sup> "New Orleans and Louisiana Bands and Performers." (<http://noladiy.org/bands.php>) *NOLA DIY*. (retrieved 23 Jan 2011)

## References

- LaFontaine, Harlan and Neil McKay. *550 Dakota Verbs*. ([http://books.google.com/books?id=\\_J6hgmOD2AUC&pg=PA145&dq=Wasicu&ei=BYHFSvGBL42-zASg54yUBA&client=firefox-a#v=onepage&q=Wasicu&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=_J6hgmOD2AUC&pg=PA145&dq=Wasicu&ei=BYHFSvGBL42-zASg54yUBA&client=firefox-a#v=onepage&q=Wasicu&f=false)) Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005. ISBN 978-0-87351-524-5.
- Simcikova, Karla. *To live fully, here and now: the healing vision in the works of Alice Walker*. (<http://books.google.com/books?id=4euzFCzvH7AC&lpg=PA18&ots=IhPS7bUh0H&dq=To%20live%20fully%20%20here%20and%20now%3A%20the%20healing%20vision%20in%20the%20works%20of%20Alice%20Walker&pg=PA18#v=onepage&q=&f=false>) Lexington Books, 2006. ISBN 978-0-7391-1160-4.

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