

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View. By Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3k87z7nj>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 43(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Landeros, Judith

Publication Date

2019

DOI

10.17953/0161-6463-43.1.113

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

with eyewitness accounts and explanations elicited from experts. This user-friendly style of presentation, including a four-page glossary of starter vocabulary on the topics covered in the book, will be of practical use to beginning speakers and young cultural leaders who will find a repertoire of words to begin practicing and to use—if they wish to name a child or have a sweat, for example—and over time, much more to return to as they deepen their immersion.

The longest chapter, “Life Circles,” covers the entire arc of an individual life, from the construction of the child’s cradleboard through the ways of preparing the body for burial and participating in a funeral. Special attention is devoted to the practices of marriage (*Pápawawshtaymat*) and the wedding trade (*Pápsħxwiit*), which Beavert defines as political arrangements for solidifying connections between families, establishing ties to resources, and governing them sustainably. The renewal of interest in Indigenous marriage as an ecological practice of reciprocity—documented by images of a contemporary marriage and of Beavert’s class at the University of Oregon—can entail, if carried to its logical conclusion, a parallel resurgence of Indigenous sovereignty.

So what is “the gift of knowledge?” And what is the significance of a linguist using this word—knowledge—rather than “information” or “data?” Beavert’s point, an indisputable one, is that settler scholarship often produces a picture of Native society in the conceptual terms of the outsiders doing the observing and not of the people doing the living. This is especially so in the case of Ichishkíin, a treasure trove for linguistic anthropologists—it is a central source of the Coyote stories, for example—who at times failed to recognize the thinkers they worked with as representatives of still-living cultures and therefore focused on extracting “information” without regard for present community needs. In transitioning from an extractive mindset to an ecological one, Beavert moves the focus away from individual things as anthropological objects (peoples, practices, words) and towards a holistic concern with the whole assemblage of living ideas—that is, knowledge—in which all things, including people, find themselves inextricably entangled. Beavert’s gift is to combine her personal store of memories with the wider world of histories she has acquired from her predecessors within the extended Sahaptin community, offering not a static dataset, but a dynamic archive of living knowledge for her inheritors to take hold of and transform.

Isaiah Lorado Wilner
University of Chicago

Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View. By Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang. New York: Routledge, 2018. 292 pages. \$155.00 cloth; \$47.95 paper; \$49.95 electronic.

In *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang bring together Indigenous scholars and scholars committed to disrupting settler colonialism in education. This book is a home for Indigenous scholars and educators to engage in conversations as they

imagine possibilities beyond meritocratic and liberal notions of schooling. By centering Indigenous epistemologies, this book connects social justice education and Indigenous and decolonizing studies to provide insight into the possibilities and futurities that are viable in the twenty-first century.

The series is representative of the agency of collaborators, editors, community, and more-than-human worlds that intersect beyond binaries of distance, time, place, and space. Land throughout this book is the first teacher, recognized as a source of philosophy, cosmology, and spirituality. Land emphasizes the importance of relationships and is seen as a carrier of stories and memories. What particularly makes this book a phenomenal contribution to the field of education is that the authors' work speaks to their commitment to decolonial methodologies that are not extractive of Indigenous peoples and their land. This book is an exemplar of how to reclaim and legitimize Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and ontologies. Within the settler colonial project of academia, the research of these scholars is inspiring and an example of how to disrupt and unsettle colonial relations of power and privilege in the ivory tower.

The book is divided into a collection of fifteen streams, or chapters, that merge together to form a larger river. The stories that are carried within each stream flow and take the reader in a journey of reflection, awareness, inspiration, and motivation to continue decolonizing education. The book begins with those streams of the river engaging in conversations about land education via narratives, stories, history, and the decolonization of knowledge. In the first chapter, Sandra Styres argues that through Indigenous stories and counterstories the dominant and normative discourses can be disrupted (35). Styres invites the reader to imagine what stories would emerge if one could "peel back the layers of concrete and earth" that cover the places where one is currently located (34). This pedagogical practice of storied relationships to land provide students with an opportunity to ask questions about their relationship to the land and recognize that it is still First Nations territories. The flow of the river waters takes us from the stories that can emerge from building a relationship with the land to the lessons that one can learn from being in reciprocal relationship with land in chapter 2. Naddli Todd Lee Ormiston shares his Canoe Journey and lessons that the Canoe Journey teaches him. Through his Canoe Journey, readers learn about a framework that is both thinking and living decolonization (39) that remind one about the "importance of place, identity, and spirituality" (49).

In chapter 3, the water flows of the river take us to Kelsey Dayle John's story and how she found the ontology of horses as an entry point to centering Indigenous and decolonial praxis. Her story demonstrates how the decolonial methodology of mapping can be used to tell a story that resists settler colonialism and allows contradictions to be together (53). The ontology of horses pushes binaries of languages, by demonstrating how language is also movement, embodied and spiritual (59). In this way, the reader learns that there are possibilities of learning through observation. In chapter 4, Marissa Muñoz calls attention to the pre-border and current border relationships. Asserting that memories of survival are still present and living in the river, land, and people, Muñoz argues that colonial frames of reference are limiting and there

is more than one singular perspective about the *frontera*. For the author, the *frontera's* rich complexity requires a practice of silence and thorough thinking in a multisensory practice inclusive of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual knowledges (77). Hence, one can recognize that the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande is living in every person and more-than-human worlds (73).

In chapter 5, Noelani Goodyear-Kaōpua argues that it is important for educators to engage in pedagogical practices that allow for improvisations and connect students with lands, waters, and other beings of the worlds (98). She introduces *etak* (wayfinding in segments) as a method that is helpful for “locating oneself” and figuring out one’s relations to “where you’ve been, where you’re going” (95) as a way to build towards alternatives and counter-hegemonies of the futures that militarization, racism, and colonialism tend to normalize. In chapter 6, Giovanni Batz introduces the reader to the efforts of the Ixil leaders to teach students “Maya ways of knowing, values, and *tichajil* (the good life)” (103). Ultimately, the Ixil University presents an alternative way of thinking about how education can empower communities by centering and legitimizing their knowledge systems and also provides an opportunity for researchers and educators to reexamine their roles and how their practices are entangled in colonial frameworks.

The next chapters in the series continue to take us to different streams of the river that center feminism, gender, and ethics. In chapter 7, Kyle T. Mays and Kevin Whalen guide us through the work of Judy Mays and Lorene Sisquoc, two Indigenous women who were engaged in sustaining and revitalizing Indigenous education in Detroit and Southern California. Mays and Whalen argue that “Indigenous feminisms rested at the heart of decolonizing Indigenous education” (128). As educators continue to engage in conversations in decolonizing studies in education, centering herstories are crucial. In chapter 8, “Queering Indigenous Education,” Alex Wilson and Marie Laing argue that “body sovereignty is inseparable from sovereignty over our lands and waters” (134). The authors call for disrupting binaries and heteropatriarchy by seeking the untold stories that link queerness and cosmology. Both authors remind us that there is no liberation without challenging how bodies are controlled and managed.

Chapter 9 challenges white-streamed notions of research ethics and how they are reimagined, reinterpreted, and renegotiated by Indigenous scholars. Madeline Whetung and Sarah Wakefield argue that current ethics policies are problematic because they “uphold the idea that settler people *do* research and Indigenous people *are* researched” (149). By centering people and their places, interrogating the power of research and researcher, they challenge readers to rethink ethical research relationships (157), thus, arguing that research methods in education studies should not be extractive of communities. In a similar light, in chapter 10 Adam Gaudry and Danielle E. Lorenz problematize how requiring a minimum amount of Indigenous content to obtain a degree at the university can only create more of a burden on Indigenous scholars and leaders. Rather, both Gaudry and Lorenz suggest that it is important to create places with administrative support that will encourage the transformation of pedagogy, focus on hiring Indigenous folks, and maintain a shared vision

to change political, economic, and cultural injustices (173). This is a key reminder of how including Indigenous scholars and scholarship does not concurrently lead to equity, sovereignty, and decolonization.

Indigenous futurities are central in the remaining chapters of the book. In chapter 11, Kim McBreen presents readers with an example of how the Maori people continue to resist and educate students by “encouraging [them] to critically explore what it means to be Maori in the twenty-first century and beyond” (186). McBreen sheds light with an example of how an Indigenous nation has rebuilt and decolonizes itself through this journey. Catherine Picton and Rasela Tufue-Dolgo, in chapter 12, similarly provide an example of how disability can be understood from a cultural and ontological perspective of identity. They demonstrate how the Tutusa framework can be used to develop disability and conceptualization policy that is grounded in Samoan identity (196). Picton and Tufue-Dolgo argue that the narratives of disability are valuable and should be acknowledged because they contribute to the “diverse tapestry of Samoan perspective” (199). Again, these examples encourage educators and researchers to center Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies and the possibilities of engaging in this decolonizing work.

In chapter 13, Teresa Newberry and Octaviana V. Trujillo argue that traditional ecological knowledges are central to finding solutions for the current global climate changes. They state that transdisciplinary approaches are key since they provide students with the opportunity to examine concepts from an Indigenous lens. In chapter 14, Nicholas XEMTOLTW Claxton and Carmen Rodríguez de France explain how their school has elders and knowledge keepers who help sustain relationships with the land, people, and culture (216). By engaging in teaching such as reef net fishing, students can strengthen their identity, but also learn and restore their relationship to live in harmony with the land (219). The authors share nine principles that can be applied to educational experiences that carry ancestral knowledge. In the last chapter, “At the Home of Our Ancestors: Ancestral Continuity in Indigenous Land-Based Language Immersion,” *chuutsqa* Layla Rorick shares her insight on designing language lessons to help current and future generations recover and strengthen their connection to their language. She argues that the Nuučaanuł language can help students “develop an understanding of the Nuučaanuł world through reconnection to the environment, reconnection to ancestral activities on the land” and ancestral ways (227). This serves as a model for communities that seek to reclaim their languages or center their languages in school systems. The series ends with a very powerful conversation that challenges the reader to rethink what counts as nature and how nature does not hold one single story. The conversation between Erin Marie Konsmo and Karyn Recollect challenge narratives of purity and invite the reader to disrupt purity narratives.

This book provides explicit examples of how decolonization is not about theorizing in the ivory tower, but rather about thinking and living decolonization. Therefore, these chapters are to be taken with patience, gratitude, and as a continuation point in a spirit of persistence. At the beginning of the series, the editors remind us that decolonization is not an endpoint. This book is a home for those who have been engaged in

living and thinking decolonization work (both inside and outside of academe). It is also an invitation for educators to rethink and engage in their own internal work to develop a relationship to the land and reflect on their positionality in the place they find themselves.

Judith Landeros

University of Texas at Austin

Indigenous Tourism Movements. By Alexis C. Bunten and Nelson H. H. Graburn. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. 268 pages. \$85.00 cloth; \$32.95 paper and electronic (CND).

In defining “Indigenous tourism” in specific terms that center the priorities of Indigenous hosts in tourist-Native interactions, this collection makes an important intervention in tourism studies and heritage studies. Edited by Alexis Bunten and Nelson Graburn, the volume’s introduction points out that in an era when Indigenous people are still disempowered and rendered invisible, tourism is the primary means through which Indigenous people export images of themselves and educate the world on issues impacting their communities. Tourism to Indigenous communities is thus a critical tool for building intercultural communication and furthering understanding about Indigenous communities. Because it has been studied primarily through a development lens, however, it is important for “Indigenous tourism,” as anthropologists call it, to be studied using decolonial frameworks that center Indigenous perspectives. *Indigenous Tourism Movements* itself reframes conversations on authenticity and showcases how Indigenous communities across the world mobilize tourism to promote their political and cultural priorities. The collection succeeds in its intentions, but notable gaps remain in the research that necessitate further engagement with critical Indigenous studies.

Featuring ethnographic and archival examples of Indigenous cultural innovation and hybridity, the majority of the contributors to *Indigenous Tourism Movements* directly and enthusiastically critique the antiquated construct of Indigenous “authenticity.” Contributors participate in the debate over representation, insisting that Indigenous cultures are not static and should be seen as living cultures that are continuously accommodating, adapting and changing despite their preservation of ancestral traditions. This intervention engages Dean MacCannell’s concept of the “performative primitive”: in *The Tourist* (1976), MacCannell argues that in light of the existential isolation produced by late capitalist modernity, the leisure class desires to “sightsee” the third world to experience people coexisting in communal arrangements, “in purer, simpler lifestyles” (3). This desire is driven by an imperialist commodification of the “purity” and/or primitivity found in human interaction in societies other than one’s own. In *Empty Meeting Grounds* (1992), MacCannell claimed that, much to the dismay of these desires, there are no longer any “authentic primitives.” Instead, he insists, there are “ex-primitives” or recently acculturated people who are lost in modern industrialization and are merely actors who stage performances for tourists (286). These