



## **International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies**

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### **Editorial**

#### **Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Maggie Walter**

This special edition of the *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* highlights the work of emerging scholars in the field of Indigenous Studies. The five featured authors were all finalists for the prize awarded by the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) to the best post-graduate student paper at the NAISA meeting held in 2010 in Tucson, Arizona. While the breadth of scholarship encompassed by the term 'Indigenous Studies' and the global representation of Indigenous peoples at NAISA mean that the topics and approaches vary widely, a common thematic of fraught post-colonial relations can be discerned within all five articles.

The first two articles highlight axiological and epistemological disjuncture. The first, from David Walsh, a doctoral student at Arizona State University, and winner of the NAISA post-graduate student paper prize, challenges portrayals of Indigenous knowledge as inferior to Western scientific knowledge. Using the work of Northern First Nations' scholars as a guiding frame, Walsh argues that the influential 2008 discourse on the topic by Widdowson and Howard represents a failure to grasp first, the concept of Indigenous knowledges and second, the cultural base of the authors' own knowledge system. Walsh realigns the problem to the gap between knowledge systems, calling for a collaborative environment which allows traditional knowledges to be articulated and heard within their own worldview. The next article, from Mary Tuti Baker, a doctoral student in Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, details the non-compatibility of traditional Kanaka Maoli values of love and care of traditional lands and those of corporate real estate investors. Using the clash around land usage on the island of Moloka'i as her empirical base, Baker contrasts the very different notions of economic progress and demonstrates how collaborative community resistance grounded in an Indigenous knowledge system can ensure that Kanaka Maoli values are preeminent in axiological contestations. Self-determination, she contends, can subvert neoliberal attempts to co-opt the community's economic and political agenda.

The next two articles deal more directly with post-colonial conflict. Sam Grey, a Masters student in the School of Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, maintains that the troubled relationship between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples challenges the notion of Canada as a nation at peace. Making the case that this relationship can be categorised as a protracted war of colonial conquest, Grey uses the doctrine of military ethics, just war theory, as an investigatory framework. The article proposes that just war theory, integrated with Indigenous decolonisation praxis, can provide a workable base for an evolving and just peace within existing colonial relations. The article from Boyd Cothran, a doctoral history student from the University of Minnesota, also explores post-colonial relationships but from the perspective of reconciliatory national narratives. Using the case study of a 1988 Indian inclusive memorial to the casualties of the late nineteenth century Modoc Wars in California, Cothran critiques the possibility of historical justice through such commemorative gestures, labelling them 'violence of equivalence'. Such reparations are posited as obscuring ongoing power imbalances with the price of narrative inclusion being the obligation to forget ongoing inequality and marginalisation. Instead, Cothran argues for a multivocal unequivalency that acknowledges the presence of power in narrations of the past. The final article, from Sierra Adare-Tasiwoopa ápi, a doctoral student in American Studies at the University of Buffalo, takes a different approach again. Adare-Tasiwoopa ápi's article proposes gardening as a way of rebonding with land. The growing of the three sisters of Indigenous sustainability in North America, corn, beans and squash, she proposes, reconnect traditional lives and ways in a manner consistent with Indigenous epistemologies; this is gardening as sovereignty. Comparing such practices with the non-Indigenous concept of war gardens she finds a similarity of nation building purpose that can resonate and forge relationships beyond Indigenous communities.

### **Book Review**

The Alaska Native Reader: History, Culture, Politics, Edited by Maria *Shaa Tláa* Williams, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Reviewed by Malia Villegas, Postdoctoral Research Fellow & Senior Research Associate, Centre for Learning Innovation, Queensland University of Technology.