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Editorial

Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Maggie Walter and David Singh

The first two articles of this edition of the journal testify to the lengthening reach of the discipline of Critical Indigenous Studies that is, remarkably, still in its nascence. Emiel Martens examines the development of Maori filmmaking since the 1980s and takes the opportunity to explore this Indigenous cinema in the context of developments in the New Zealand film industry generally. Shifting from cultural production to renewable energy, Steven M. Hoffman and Thibault Martin remind us that in the effort to satiate the demands for energy, it is often Indigenous peoples who bear adverse consequences. Using a social capital framework, the authors examine the impact of the development of hydroelectric power upon a displaced Aboriginal community and conclude that displacement has resulted in an erosion of cohesive social bonds that once ensured a sustainable way of life.

Increasing confidence notwithstanding, the remaining articles are mindful of the vulnerability of the emerging discipline to mischaracterisation and political opposition. Insisting on a clearer conceptual understanding, a scholarly collective comprising Mike Evans, Chris Andersen, Devin Dietrich, Carrie Bourassa, Tricia Logan, Lawrence D. Berg and Elizabeth Devolder take issue with recent ethical guidelines, stressing the importance of Aboriginal community engagement in research. Although broadly welcomed, the authors highlight ways in which the understanding of 'community' employed by the guidelines relies on hegemonic conceptions of Aboriginality and 'white spatial imaginaries of Aboriginal geographies'. The authors contrast this understanding with their experience of Métis communities, which reveal them to be far removed from the 'well-structured, landed, bounded and distinct rural communities' assumed by the guidelines. The authors conclude that by instituting flawed understandings of Aboriginality and spatiality, the guidelines risk re-marginalising Métis communities.

Chris Andersen features again in this issue with a self-reflective article examining how simplified and politically expedient understandings of racism among his Indigenous Studies students warranted a revised pedagogical approach. He describes how a particular combination of concept, methodology and focus brought about clearer understandings of the workings of racism and white privilege. Deploying Aileen Moreton-Robinson's concept of 'white possession', together with discourse analysis and a focus on the exploration of local, rather than heralded national examples of racism, Andersen was better able to denaturalise racism and white privilege. This benefitted those of his students who had previously sought extreme and therefore exceptional examples for their written assignments. Finally, Roberto Dr Cintli Rodriguez's article examines the cultural significance of running in Indigenous Mexican American communities and the recent ways the practice has been used to raise political consciousness in the struggle to defend Raza Studies from accusations of anti-Americanism. A reluctant runner himself, Rodriguez participates in a number of ceremonial runs, returning to ancestral understandings of how running is both spiritual and a way of teaching and acquiring knowledge. This is made clear to him in a ceremonial run from Tucson to Phoenix, organised in protest against a state Senate Bill to ban Ethnic Studies from Arizona's public schools.

Book Review

Indigenous Research Methodologies by Bagele Chilisa (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012) reviewed by Cindy Hanson, PhD, Assistant Professor of Adult Education & HRD, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.