



# The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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## Section D: Reviews

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### Decolonising Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples

**Linda Tuhiwai Smith**

Published by Zed Books Ltd., London and New York and University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 1999

*Reviewed by Dennis Foley, Lecturer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, The University of Queensland*

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou) is an Associate Professor in Education and Director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education at the University of Auckland. Her book provides an insight into many of the difficulties that Indigenous researchers face.

A common problem faced by Indigenous Australian postgraduate students is that when we commence our studies we have passion, enthusiasm and culturally driven motivators that are often misinterpreted (or misunderstood) by our non-Indigenous supervisors. An all too common result is that we become disillusioned and many of us cease our postgraduate research or opt for a way out and seek course-based subjects to obtain our qualification. This loss of Indigenous research by Indigenous Australian researchers is perturbing. Linda Smith provides an insight into the causation of many Indigenous students' frustrations.

Research as it stands today in Australian Universities is ethnocentric in its administration, its application, its pedagogy and epistemology. Indigenous research does not fit into this ethnocentric equation; Linda Smith however looks at this from the Indigenous perspective in that we are colonized. 'Research'

is closely linked with European colonialism, similar to the relationship that scientific research has been implicated in the excesses of imperialism. History from the coloniser controls the colonised. Smith calls for the decolonisation of research methods.

The book is written over ten chapters, which are:

1. Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory
2. Research Through Imperial Eyes
3. Colonizing Knowledges
4. Research Adventures on Indigenous Lands
5. Notes from Down Under
6. The Indigenous Peoples Project: Setting a New Agenda
7. Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda
8. Twenty-five Indigenous Projects (this covers projects on claiming, testimonies, story-telling, celebrating survival, Indigenousising, and so on.)
9. Responding to the Imperatives of an Indigenous Agenda: A case Study of Maori
10. Towards Developing Indigenous Methodologies: Kaupapa Maori Research.

The book can be broken down into two distinct areas of thought. In the first part of the book, Linda Smith critically examines the historical and philosophical foundation of Western research. She extends the work of Foucault exploring the collision of imperialism, knowledge and research. In this process the reader obtains a history of knowledge from the Enlightenment of European powers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which signalled the imperial economic, political expansion with cultural, intellectual and

technical advancements. This record of history continues to the postcolonial period.

The second part of the book provides an insight into the frustrations faced by Indigenous researchers. It validates many of our problems. It is written in a Maori context, which has numerous applications and similarities to Indigenous Australia. Linda Smith illustrates with numerous examples the problem of

Indigenous research within Western paradigms. To the Indigenous reader it provides an insight that allows the Indigenous researcher to reclaim control over Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

This book should be compulsory reading to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research students. □

## Call for Submissions

The Editors of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* welcome submissions such as:

- ◆ articles of 2,500 to 3,000 words on issues relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- ◆ research reports
- ◆ news items
- ◆ book reviews
- ◆ notices of forthcoming conferences, seminars, etc.
- ◆ reports on relevant conferences
- ◆ information about resource centres and how to access them
- ◆ resources and materials for teachers and students.

Please see inside back cover of this issue for **Guidelines for Contributors**.

All material should be sent to:

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