



Indigenous
Studies
Research
Network

2012 Indigenous Studies Research Network Seminar Series

Associate Professor Troy A. Richardson (Tuscarora/Saponi), Cornell University

Biography

My research, scholarship and pedagogical efforts center on expanding the philosophical and conceptual foundations of education to include the intellectual traditions of Indigenous and other minoritized communities. I draw particular attention to the epistemological and ontological dimensions of Indigeneity as it is revealed in literature, visual culture and non-fiction works by Indigenous peoples. More specifically, I theorize the nature of selfhood, ethics, gender, ecology and power from these Indigenous intellectual traditions to chart the alternative social and philosophical imaginaries of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, this work assists in revealing the precise operations of a still operative colonialism in Euro-centric intellectualism and knowledge production in research and academic settings. My scholarship seeks to contribute to a global philosophical and theoretical discourse developed by Indigenous peoples to inform a de-colonial education.

Indigenous Well Being as Aesthetic Ethical Acts: Rethinking the Generative Sites of/for Well Being in Contemporary Indigenous Knowledges

Abstract

Indigenous activists and scholars are contributing to a critical re-conception and reformulation of well being, particularly as it has been put in use by international actors such as the United Nations (UN). More specifically, the Human Development Index (HDI) has become both a help and a hindrance to conceptualizing the well being of Indigenous families and communities as it is regularly limited to discussions of economic income, educational attainment and physical health. While affirming the importance of such indicators as essential to gauging well being, there is much more that needs to be said on how Indigenous well being is also intimately bound up in the securing of rights to traditional lands and waters, official recognition and the freedom of political practices for self determination and the maintaining of the cultural integrity of Indigenous peoples.

In this presentation I will begin with the complexity of the latter conceptualization of well being with a slight twist; I will outline a notion of Indigenous well being as it emerges from sites *other* than those exclusively dedicated to the question or determination of well being as development. That is, I will be tracing the question of “well being” through a juxtaposition of traditional Tuscarora narratives, recent film (*The Fast Runner*, *The Business of Fancydancing*, *Stones*) and some contemporary novels, (*Chancers*, *Dead Voices*). I take this approach to probe something of the Indigenous philosophies of well being as they are formulated in and through aesthetic forms – as complimentary yet distinct from legal, political or developmental terminologies. I will suggest how Indigenous well being is an aesthetic ethical practice that informs, animates and makes real the relation to land, water and community. Moreover, the now globalized Indigenous aesthetic ethics (and there are multiple) articulated through these various media, more acutely expose how mainstream discourses of well being are ultimately organized by Greek and Judeo-Christian philosophies; a point that needs greater attention in the normative language of well being where it operationalizes a coloniality of knowledge production through the Greek concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness, human flourishing, well being). These more and less visible Greek and Judeo-Christian frameworks must be placed in question to maintain and exert the cultural integrity of aesthetic ethical modalities for Indigenous well being.

Date: Monday 9th July 2012

Time: 12:00-1:30pm

Where: A Block, Room 105, Kelvin Grove Campus, QUT

Please note that RSVP is essential, lunch will be provided please provide any dietary requirements when confirming your attendance. For further information and bookings please email isrn@qut.edu.au or phone (07) 3138 8611



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