

Introduction

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I am very proud to see the publication of this sixth issue of the *Journal of Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies (JACANZS)*. JACANZS continues to be the only journal that I am aware of in the field that is not only open access but also not-for-profit, i.e. no one must pay for their contribution in the journal to be made open access, including institutions. It continues to publish cutting-edge inter- and multidisciplinary research, as well as a plethora of insightful reviews which showcase the wonderful books being published in the field. Furthermore, it offers reflections by senior scholars on their careers in Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand studies, as well as showcasing the excellent work taking place in related research centres, institutes, and schools across the world.

This latest issue of the journal contains two research articles. They both illustrate the innovative research taking place in the field and reflect the inter- and multidisciplinary nature of the journal. One of the articles focuses on Canada, while the other compares Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand. Both articles also highlight the growing strength of the journal in Indigenous Studies, with the former taking a political science approach, and the latter a legal and political one. This is what the journal strives for: wide geographical scope, comparative analyses, and inter- and multidisciplinary approaches. Moreover, this issue builds on one of the major strengths of the journal, which is its attention to the burgeoning literature of the field. To that end,

¹ I am extremely grateful to Dr. Effie Karageorgos for peer reviewing this introduction.

there are nearly forty book reviews within this issue, both regular and reflective, showcasing the wonderful research that is being published on these countries.

This current issue of *JACANZS* adds to two sections from past issues of the journal: 'Reflections on Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies' and 'Showcasing Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies Centres Around the World'. Within the former, two retired academics reflect on their career in the field, and in the latter Directors of Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies centres in Canada and the United States showcase the exciting activities taking place at their respective centres.

The articles in this edition begin with Emily Grafton and Jérôme Melançon's 'Searching for relationality in our scholarship: Opportunities for decolonizing the discipline of political science' which argues that many post-secondary academic programs, including political science, are currently undergoing decolonization processes. This is not entirely new; Deloria Jr. (1986) and Deloria Jr. and Wilkins (1999) labelled political science as the 'midwife' or the most appropriate disciplinary home for Indigenous studies. Recent critiques by scholars have pointed out the ongoing limitations of political science's attention to Indigenous Peoples and politics (Ladner 2017; Wallace 2022). Grafton and Melançon argue that the field is influenced by diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks that affect the inclusion of Indigenous studies and the potential for decolonization. Using *keeoukaywin* or the Visiting Way (Gaudet 2019) as their methodological guide, they assess their own scepticism and support for placing Indigenous studies within political science, particularly as a distinct subfield. They consider how Indigenous politics—both practiced and studied—can

challenge and enrich political science, typically framed in Western terms. It may be that, with some rearranging to make room for Indigenous epistemologies and political ontologies, political studies can be a temporary home for Indigenous studies within a hostile academia, where despite fundamental conflicts, there may be sufficient commonalities in the objects that we seek to understand to allow for cohabitation—for a time.

‘The implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand’ by Jatinder Mann explores the extent to which Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand have implemented the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), with a particular focus on self-determination. The latter three countries along with the United States of America (USA) were the only four countries that voted against the adoption of UNDRIP in the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand all subsequently endorsed UNDRIP, but when it comes to implementation there have been significant variations between the three countries. Canada has done the most by legislatively enshrining UNDRIP domestically and adopting an Action Plan outlining how UNDRIP will be put into practice. However, the extent and depth of collaboration with Indigenous peoples within this Action Plan has been a source of some criticism. Aotearoa New Zealand commissioned a report into how it could implement UNDRIP domestically but shelved this after a fierce backlash from opposition parties who subsequently formed the current government and who even threaten to withdraw the country’s endorsement of UNDRIP. Australia also commissioned an inquiry into domestic implementation of UNDRIP, and subsequently

published a report with several recommendations, none of which have been directly addressed by the Australian government. This lack of response is partly due to the political capital spent by the current Labor government on the failed *Voice* referendum in October 2023. Furthermore, there has been some judicial activism, especially in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand when it comes to UNDRIP implementation. Indigenous peoples in all three countries have also made use of international pressure to keep their respective governments on track when it comes to UNDRIP implementation.

Doug Munro reflects on 'Masquerading as a Historian of Australia' and the fascinating journey that he took during his very geographically broad career and is very honest about the various challenges that he faced. In the second reflection, 'Interwoven Journeys: Comparative Reflections on the Study of Aotearoa New Zealand' by David Pearson surveys his interesting career in Aotearoa New Zealand Studies as a sociologist. His early career took him from the United Kingdom (UK) to Aotearoa New Zealand. A strong theme in Pearson's reflective piece is his research shifting from a focus on the UK and Aotearoa New Zealand to also include other former British settler societies.

Caryolyn Podruchny and Jean Michel Montsion, in their piece showcasing the activities of the Roberts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University illustrate the incredible range of activities taking place there. The international links and collaboration that the centre has developed is particularly impressive. Alan Tidwell highlights the significant research coming out of The Centre for Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Studies (CANZPS) at Georgetown University. It is the contemporary nature of this

research that makes CANZPS one of the leading centres for Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand studies in the USA.

As mentioned above, this issue of *JACANZS* has nearly forty book reviews. This is the first issue of the journal with me as Book Reviews Editor for all the reviews alongside Editor-in-Chief of the journal. Although it has been a very rewarding experience, I am very keen to hand over the reins to a replacement especially as I have taken on a very demanding new position as the Director of the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley. So, if you are interested in becoming Book Reviews Editor of the journal please do contact me.

Nevertheless, there are some continued frustrations that come with the role. These relate mainly to the continuing trend of some publishers to only provide eCopies of their books instead of hardcopies for reviewers, which unsurprisingly makes it much more difficult to secure reviewers, as receiving a hardcopy of a book is usually seen as a way of saying thank you for carrying out an essentially voluntary activity. The provision of only eCopies by certain publishers accelerated during Covid-19 and sadly some publishers have continued this trend as they probably found that it saves them time and money. So, I want to publicly commend those publishers who are still willing to send out hardcopies to reviewers as doing a great service to their authors, who have worked really hard on their books and would like to see them reviewed in as many places as possible. Furthermore, book reviewing remains under-appreciated in academia, which means that it is not always easy to secure reviewers. Nor is that the last hurdle: for a multitude of reasons, reviews cannot always be completed within agreed deadlines. Following the status of pending, due, overdue, and completed book reviews is one of

the administrative challenges of the Book Reviews Editor, which is why clear communication with and from reviewers is highly prized. Thankfully, most reviewers are great at this and only rarely does a reviewer fall off the face of the earth. The truth of this is borne out by the high number of reviews in this volume: I must thank the many reviewers who have already contributed to the journal and, in advance, those who remain willing to give up their time to fulfill these requests in the future. If you have the time and are interested in reviewing books for the journal, please do get in touch.

I hope you enjoy reading this latest issue of *JACANZS*. As one member of the editorial board of the journal commented once to me, this is clearly a personal labour of love. With the release of every volume, I am reminded of why it is worth the effort. And one last thanks to the wonderful editorial board of *JACANZS* for their continued support of the journal. I have said before a journal is only as good as its editorial board, and *JACANZS* is extremely fortunate to have such an exceptionally strong one.