



## A NEW BOOK ON INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL DISPLACEMENT

*Entangled Territorialities: Negotiating Indigenous Lands in Australia and Canada.* Edited by Francoise Dussart and Sylvie Poirier. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2017. Pp xiii, 272. Index. ISBN: 978-1487521592

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### Abstract

*Entangled Territorialities: Negotiating Indigenous Lands in Australia and Canada* opens with a Foreword from Professor John Borrows, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law and a mentor I revere and honour. Without diluting the profundity of its contents, here is an excerpt of Borrows' perspective of *Entangled Territorialities*:

To be alive is to be entangled in relationship not entirely of our own making. We are born to parents who we did not choose. Our families pre-existed our arrival. We receive languages, cultures, and world views before getting much choice in the matter. Our formative years are threaded with social, emotional, and economic relationship that we did not conceive. They are woven into our very being, largely without our permission. We are structured by race, class, and gender without much ability to resist, at least at first. These identities are generally knitted into our very being without our active and autonomous choice. We often live with the consequences of these decisions throughout our lives. Sometimes these decisions affect generations of people, through vast epochs of time. And it is not only individuals who deal with this reality. Nations, peoples, and species face the same circumstances. Free, prior, and informed consent is weakly deployed when receiving life's first endowments (pvii). (...) our entanglements can either be liberating or oppressive (pviii). (...) tradition is a source of different ways of living (pix). (...) each essay effectively illustrates how Indigenous peoples reconstruct their distinctive identities, notwithstanding, ongoing colonial encounters (pix).

The edited book is divided into 11 chapters. Authored by the editors, Francoise Dussart and Sylvie Poirier, chapter one, *Knowing and Managing the Land: The Conundrum of Coexistence and Entanglement*, explicates the significance of entanglement situating its meaning within the larger context of the troubled relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples regarding the "knowledge, use, and management of their customary lands" (p4) in Canada and Australia.

### Keywords

Indigenous Peoples, territories, customary lands, Australia, Canada

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“To be alive is to be entangled in relationship not entirely of our own making. We are born to parents who we did not choose. Our families pre-existed our arrival. We receive languages, cultures, and world views before getting much choice in the matter. Our formative years are threaded with social, emotional, and economic relationship that we did not conceive. They are woven into our very being, largely without our permission. We are structured by race, class, and gender without much ability to resist, at least at first. These identities are generally knitted into ur very being without our active and autonomous choice. We often live with the consequences of these decision throughout our lies. Sometimes these decisions affect generations of people, through vast epochs of time. And it is not only individuals who deal with this reality. Nations, peoples, and species face the same circumstances. Free, prior, and informed consent is weakly deployed when receiving life's first endowments (pvii). (...) our entanglements can either be liberating or oppressive (pviii). (...) tradition is a source of different ways of living (pix). (...) each essay effectively illustrates how Indigenous peoples reconstruct their distinctive identities, notwithstanding, ongoing colonial encounters (pix).

The edited book is divided into 11 chapters. Authored by the editors, Francoise Dussart and Sylvie Poirier, chapter one, *Knowing and Managing the Land: The Conundrum of Coexistence and Entanglement*, explicates the significance of entanglement by situating its meaning within the larger context of the troubled relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples regarding the “knowledge, use, and management of their customary lands” (p4) in Canada and Australia. In chapter two, *Dialogues on Surviving: Eeyou Hungers' Ways of Engagement with Land, Governments, and Youth*, Harvey A. Feit discusses early negotiations between Eeyou hunters and Quebec and Canada in 1972 and 1975 when the James Bay hydroelectric project began. Even though Eeyou hunters repeatedly sought to confront “life threatening starvation, refusals of proper trade and reciprocity, disruptive development of lands, or life-threatening denials of their presence and governance, [by] engaging family members, neighbours, traders, judges, and government officials, (...) surviving is never certain” (p43-44) as they have been forced off their land by the encroaching dam projects.

Colin Scott's chapter three, *The Endurance of Relational Ontology: Encounters between Eeyouch and Sport Hunters*, explores ethical, (dis)respectful, and consensual relationships “in a prosaic setting of competition and cooperation between Eeyouch who hunt for their livelihoods and so-called ‘sport hunters’ who are one factor in the many challenges to the security of those Eeyou livelihoods” (p52-53). In chapter four, *Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas: Resistance, Articulation, and Entanglement in the Context of Natural Resource Management*, Frances Morphy made a case for viewing Indigenous Protected Area movements “as the latest context for an ongoing Yolngu Project that has been pursued with a well-documented consistency since the arrival of Methodist missionaries in Yolngu country in the 1920s and 1930s” (p73). Highlighting the historical importance of Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia, Morphy affirms that Yolngu people long and distinguished engagement in resisting the dispossession of their land under settler law.

Elodie Fache's chapter five, *Mediation between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Another Analysis of 'Two-Way' Conservation in Northern Australia* discusses the policy aspiration of Indigenous Australians using the concept of mediation "to jointly use their own knowledge systems and Western science in the context of land and sea management", – a two-way approach (vis-à-vis "two-way learning", "two-way transmission", "both ways approach" or "two-toolbox approach" enacted by the Northern Territory of Australia (p92, 97). In chapter 6, *Cultural Politics of Land and Animals in Treaty 8 Territory (Northern Alberta, Canada)*, drawing on a mixed-method ethnographic linguistic, and policy research in Northern Alberta since 1996, Clinton N. Westman dissects "the cultural politics of the land and animals for members of semi-isolated Cree-Metis communities" (p117). Chapter seven, *Entanglements in Coast Salish Ancestral Territories*, written by Brian Thom, "investigates contemporary entanglements with the agency of Indigenous ancestors and spirits, continuing to reflect on shared experiences of the world that [the author's] Coast Salish friends, teachers, and colleagues have pointed out" (p142). Drawing on ontological categories, Thom reflects on his encounters with Coast Salish ancestral land and how it is stewarded by individuals and actors in such an entangled world (p144).

Sachiko Kobota's chapter 8, *Transmission of Knowledge, Clans, and Lands among the Yolngu (Northern Territory, Australia)*, "describes the historical changes that have transformed the lives of the Aboriginal people in northeastern Arnhem Land" (p165). Divided into three historical periods, Kobota closely examines the reassertion of morning ceremonies in the past and present times by "analysing the complex and dynamic dimensions of the ontological entanglements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples' relationships with the land" (p165). In chapter nine, *Alien Relations: Ecological and Ontological Dilemmas Posed for Indigenous Australians in the Management of 'Feral' Camels on Their Lands*, Petronella Vaarzon-Morel focuses on Aboriginal people using camels as transports in central Australia, whose management has become a source of tension and dilemma. Vaarzon-Morel critiques Descola's characterization - that Aboriginal Australians "inhibit" the recognition of animals communication as intentional beings because they do not personalize relationships with totemic animals (p187).

Sylvie Poirier's chapter 10, *Nehirowisiw Territoriality: Negotiating and Managing Entanglement and Coexistence*, stresses both the human resources and competences that the Nehirowisiwok men and women must mobilise at the national political, regional, and community levels to be present and active on issues around the definition and recognition of Indigenous land rights, titles, and sovereignty in Canada (p212-214). In the final chapter (11), *Is There a Role for Anthropology in Cultural Reproduction? Maps, Mining, and the 'Cultural Future' in Central Australia*, Nicolas Peterson explores the issue of the contribution of mapping of the Warlpiri cultural landscapes with regards to Warlpiri cultural future. The case study "in which local desires are entangled with changing ontologies, lawyer culture, anthropological obligations, and demography, raises questions about the nature of Warlpiri cultural future" with respect to their hunting and gathering existence (p237).

In summary, *Entangled Territorialities* evidently validate Indigenous peoples ongoing struggle ("entanglements") land dispossession and forced displacement as a result of colonisation and imposition of settler laws. The book serves as a critical dialogue, theoretical framework, and practical tool for teachers, researchers, lawyers, practitioner, and community advocates of Indigenous customary land rights.