

**Replanting Cultures: Community-Engaged Scholarship in Indian Country.** Edited by Chief Benjamin J. Barnes and Stephen Warren. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022. 365 pages. \$33.95 paper; \$95.00 cloth.

*As an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, my opinions in this review are mine alone and do not reflect opinions of the Cherokee Nation, other Cherokee tribal members, or Indigenous people as a whole.*

Researchers interested in community-engaged scholarship may become excited when they first read this book title. They may even delight in the idea that someone has made a how-to guide on relationship-building with Indigenous communities. However, that is not what this book is or sets out to be. Instead, what they find themselves reading is a collection of essays and case studies from researchers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, that detail their perspectives and experiences with community engagement. Contributors share their successes and failures, and many researchers share retrospectives on their own practice methods and how they contributed to colonizing and imperial ideologies. Understanding that there is no blanket approach to relationship-building with Indigenous communities is crucial before diving into these stories.

Whether a seasoned researcher or a novice student in grad school is picking up this text, some foundational knowledge in federal Indian law and policy is required. Contributors to the text do not waste precious pages on in-depth historical explanations regarding the laws and policies that have brought Indian country to its current state. Those unfamiliar with landmark court cases and federal policies may feel lost or even overwhelmed when those topics are brought up. However, ample time is spent detailing what exactly community-engaged scholarship is and how that relationship has looked and developed historically.

The relationship between Indigenous communities and academic institutions has been one of animosity and distrust for generations. Academics, in the name of research, have been infiltrating Indigenous communities and plundering not only physical artifacts but cultural knowledge and ancestral remains as well. This power dynamic has broadly existed in favor of academic institutions, and generally presents under the guise of betterment and the preservation of Indigenous ways of life, yet most academic research is not shared with those Indigenous communities once it is completed. What most often occurs is the Indigenous community receives no benefits from the research they were the center of. Researchers claim what they are doing is a form of cultural preservation, and to them this preservation is justified because Indigenous communities and cultures are “disappearing.” Researchers gather what they need, not for the Indigenous community they have just marauded but to present it to their colleagues, become recognized as experts on those communities, and then move on to their

next research topic. This form of research can hardly be called a relationship when only one side is benefiting. This misuse of Indigenous knowledge has also led to a narrow-minded understanding of Indigenous cultures that has resulted in widespread stereotypes and tropes that most people now associate with all Indigenous nations. For too long Indigenous communities have stood by while research was conducted about them for the benefit of others. But what happens when academic entities listen to Indigenous voices and communities instead of ignoring their needs for the sake of research? Researchers should not be asking Indigenous communities, “What can we take?” Rather, they should be asking, “What can we give?” This collection sets out to showcase what happens when mutual respect and understanding are at the center of research and engagement.

Voice is at the heart of these essays and case studies. This text sheds light on what results when the academy and Indigenous communities come together and do what benefits the Indigenous community being researched while also supporting the institution and its academics. This manifests through researchers listening to Indigenous communities and asking them how institutional resources can help in the tribe’s version of cultural preservation. Giving voice to a tribal nation is also a testament to tribal sovereignty and a step toward decolonization on the researcher’s part. Regardless of how determined a researcher may be on studying a specific aspect of an Indigenous community, if that community declines, the researcher should respect those wishes and move on. The non-Indigenous contributors who lend their experiences to this book are testaments to what allyship should look like. They prove how researchers can shift their mindsets when it comes to academic research and integrity while still satisfying their yearning for research and study. Their passion for the Indigenous people they are helping is a highlight of their essays.

It should be noted that relationship-building and community engagement will look vastly different for each tribe and nation based on their needs and past experiences with academia. The essays here target tribal nations in the midwestern United States with particular focus centered on the Miami and Shawnee nations in Oklahoma. This nonblanket approach is highlighted several times by multiple essay contributors, and neglecting to understand this concept is one of the reasons many of them experienced failure on their part. Again, this text is not meant to be a manual or step-by-step guide on community relations for researchers in academia. Rather, it serves to provide examples on how several entities were able to develop a successful relationship and focus on projects like language revitalization, pottery making, and repatriation—detailing what this relationship-building looked like for them and doing this in ways in which researchers within the institution are simultaneously serving the community’s interests and their own academic needs.

Individuals familiar with Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s groundbreaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2021) will revel in seeing real-life demonstrations of best practices concerning Indigenous people researched by colonizing entities. Smith is frequently referenced throughout the contributions, so some basic knowledge of her writings may be needed before reading this book. At the very least, this book should inspire readers to seek out her work. In addition, for a more abstract look at the tumultuous

relationship between academic institutions and Indigenous communities, Jenny Davis' *Trickster Academy* (2022) is recommended. Her poems provide an Indigenous perspective of this relationship through deep and thought-provoking prose.

The essays and case studies shared here are an excellent showcase of what community-engaged scholarship should look like. This book would be an excellent resource for individuals in the fields of Native American studies, student affairs, history, and anthropology. It should serve as foundational reading for any researcher interested in community-engaged study.

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